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THE

MOTHERS OF ENGLAND

THEIR

INFLUENCE & RESPONSIBILITY.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF THE "WOMEN OF ENGLAND."

1843 b

PETER JACKSON, LATE FISHER, SON & CO.
ANGEL STREET, ST. MARTIN'S-LE-GRAND, LONDON

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THE AUTHOR OF THE "WOMEN OF ENGLAND."
(Mrs) Sarah Stickney Ellis

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PREFACE.

In offering to the public the last of a series of works on the subject of female duty, I feel that to confess their deficiencies would not be to supply them; and therefore I would prefer soliciting the attention of the reader to this fact—that they have not been written under the idea of presenting an entire summary of the life and character of Woman, in the situation of Daughter, Wife, and Mother; nor, consequently, under that of offering a substitute for any of those standard and excellent works on the same subject which adorn our libraries; but rather with the hope of throwing out a few hints and observations relative to the

present state of English society—the tendency of modern education—and the peculiar social and domestic requirements of the country and the times in which we live.

Thus I have purposely avoided entering upon many important points of duty, and particularly those of a strictly religious nature, because I knew that the reader could find them more clearly and more ably treated elsewhere; and because I felt it to be more within the compass of my own qualifications, to endeavour to assist and encourage the inexperienced but well-meaning, than to instruct the ignorant, or to convert the irreligious.

Looking seriously at those faults which are generally allowed, and at those follies which are sanctioned by society, I have been compelled occasionally to speak in strong language of certain peculiarities in the present aspect of social and domestic life; and especially of some of the habits and prejudices of my own sex. Had such peculiarities been less popular, or less generally indulged; had they, in short, been regarded as objectionable,

rather than otherwise, there would have been no need for me to have made any of them the subject of a book; but the very fact of the opinion of society, and of many excellent persons, being in favour of that which is really opposed to the true interests of mankind, renders it the more necessary for those who think differently to speak what they believe to be the truth, and to speak it without palliation or reserve.

If, in the performance of this somewhat stern duty, I may at times have appeared unjust, or unsisterly to the class of readers whose attention I have been anxious to engage, they will surely have been able to perceive that it was from no want of sympathy with the weakness, the trials, and the temptations to which woman is peculiarly liable; but rather, since we can least bear a fault in that which we most admire, from an extreme solicitude that woman should fill, with advantage to others and enjoyment to herself, that high place in the creation for which I believe her character to have been designed.

It was originally my intention to have added to the present work, a chapter of hints for Step-mothers, and another on the consolations of Old Maids, which I am far from believing to be few; but the subject more immediately under consideration grew from its importance to the usual extent of a book, almost before I was aware of it; and it grew also upon my own mind, as the duties and responsibilities of a mother were gradually unfolded, to an aspect of such solemn, profound, and immeasurable interest, that I feel the more forcibly how inadequate are my feeble representations, to do justice to the claims of society upon the devoted, conscientious, and persevering exertions of the Mothers of England.

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THE

MOTHERS OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

A MOTHER'S FIRST THOUGHTS.

To attempt a description of the *feelings* of a mother on that important event which ushers into the world an immortal being, destined to be her peculiar charge, in its preparation both for this world and the next, would be to lift the natural veil, beyond which are shrouded those inner workings of the elements of happiness and misery, with which it may be truly said, that a stranger intermeddleth not. Still there are—there must be *thoughts* common to all mothers who reflect seriously; and it is with these chiefly, that the writer on maternal influence has to do.

It is no disparagement to that strongest of all principles in the female sex—a mother's love—to call it a mere instinct; for such it must be, when shared in common with the animal creation. Yet

surely an instinct of such power as this, cannot be acted upon by a rational and responsible being, without anxious inquiry as to the direct nature of that responsibility; and why, in the ordinations of Divine Providence, an instinct so powerful should have been implanted in the mother's breast.

A mother's love, then, could never have been intended merely to be trifled with in the nursery, or expended in infantine indulgence. That which is strong enough to overcome the universal impulse of self-preservation—that which brings the timid bird to stoop her wing to the destroyer, in order to lure him from her nestlings—that which softens into tenderness the nature of the eagle, and the lion—that which has power to render the feeblest and most delicate of women, unflinching, heroical, and bold—can never have been given by the Author of our existence, for any mean or trifling purpose. In the animal creation we see that this wonder-working principle answers the end of its creation, simply by instructing the mother how to prepare for her offspring, and by enabling her to protect and provide for them during the limited period of their helplessness, and incapacity for providing for themselves.

Thus far the human mother proceeds in the same manner; but as there is an existence beyond

this, for which she has to prepare, so the love of the human mother, by its continuance to the end of life, is beautifully adapted to those higher responsibilities which devolve upon her as the parent of an immortal being, whose lot, it is her privilege to hope, will be cast amongst the happy, the holy, and the pure, for ever.

There is then a deep moral connected with the joyful tidings, that a child is born into the world. And "joyful" let us call these tidings, notwithstanding all which a morbid and miserable philosophy would teach, about another human creature being sent into this world, to sin and suffer like the rest. Yes, "joyful" let us call it; for the beneficent Creator himself has designed that there should be joy, and nature attests that there is joy, connected with this event; while the fond heart of the mother acknowledges in the smiles of her infant, an "overpayment of delight" for all her solicitudes, her anxieties, and her fears.

And why should the mother not rejoice? Has she not become the possessor of a new nature, to whose support she can devote all the vast resources of her self-love, without its selfishness? She has now an object peculiarly her own, for which to think and to feel; and, not less—for which to suffer. It is with joy then that a new being is

ushered into the world, to share its portion amongst the many, in the mingled lot of human weal and woe; to enter upon a career in which it is but reasonable to indulge the hope of filling an honoured place on the great theatre of life, of contributing its share to the sum of human happiness, and of enjoying in its turn the full exercise of all those faculties of mind and body, with which so much happiness is connected.

Why should the mother not rejoice? Have we so learned the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour, that we cannot trust to him the keeping of our earthly treasure? Surely there is infidelity of the most ungrateful kind, in that spirit which believes, and yet knows not how to trust. But there is both hope and trust in the mother's heart at that glad moment when she folds her infant to her bosom; for though she may herself have failed in judgment and in will ten thousand times, and fallen short in acts of duty almost beyond the hope of pardon, she looks into the guileless countenance of her child, and while the tears of true repentance fall upon its brow, she dedicates its young life, with all its growing energies, to a holier and more faithful service than she, with her weakness and waywardness, has been able to pursue.

Granting then that there is joy in the event of a child being ushered into life, and that such joy is founded chiefly upon a kind of indefinite hope which fills the mother's breast; granting, also, as one of our first poets has beautifully said, that

——"The food of Hope
Is meditated action,"

the most natural inquiry—nay, that which must necessarily follow in the mind of a rational woman, is—For what shall I prepare my child?

Pending the solution of this most important question, it is more than probable that the mother's thoughts will go back to her own childhood. By the many retrospective glances she has at different times thrown back upon the course of her own life, she will no doubt have been able to perceive many defects in the management and training by which she was herself conducted from infancy to youth, and now, if ever, she looks seriously upon this picture, with a fervent desire to ascertain the truth; to make out, as in a faithful chart, the rocks and shoals upon which her own bark may at different times have nearly suffered shipwreck; as well as the safer channels through which she has at other times been enabled to pass unharmed.

There are quiet hours permitted almost to all, before a mother enters again upon the active duties

of life, during which this peculiar kind of retrospection might be, and no doubt often is, carried on with lasting benefit to herself and her family. Yet, on the other hand, it is deeply to be regretted, that the frivolous or low conversation of an ignorant nurse, should so often be permitted to rob these golden hours of their real value, by the introduction of idle jests and vulgar gossip, gathered up from other families and households, where the nurse has been in some measure a confidential, though temporary servant; and where she must necessarily have formed but a very imperfect idea of the general state of things within the domestic circle. How many a private history, whether true or false, has been thus detailed—how many a character has been robbed of its good name—how many an injurious suspicion has been excited which time could never afterwards obliterate, those women best can tell, who have found the first weeks of a mother's life hang heavily upon their hands, because shut out from their accustomed occupations and amusements; and who have consequently resorted to this means, in the hope of obtaining relief from the burden of their own dull thoughts.

I have no voluntary condemnation to pass upon the class of necessary assistants to which these expressions refer. So far from it, I have often

thought that their unremitting exertions, their cheerful devotedness to the comfort of a family in which they can feel no particular interest; and, above all, their care and solicitude for the preservation of a young life which can never be anything to them,—entitle these nurses, especially, to gratitude and respect. That they are not a more enlightened class of women, is certainly no fault of their's; and if they do sometimes make family histories fill up the long hours of their attendance in a sick-room, the blame of their doing so attaches far more to those who listen, than to those who tell.

But what is the young mother to do under these circumstances, who has never cultivated the habit of serious thought, and still less that of self-examination? By such there is but one thing to be done—to begin to cultivate these habits now. Hitherto she may have believed that she was acting only for herself, and therefore she may have been willing, to a certain extent, to reap the consequences of her own actions; but now the consequences are strictly to another, and that other a being almost dearer than herself. Upon her parents, her relatives, nay, even upon her husband, she may have secretly thrown the blame of many of her own faults and deficiencies; but there can be no blame thrown upon another here. The field is open

before her, in which she has to act—the page is clear and vacant upon which she has to write. Whatever is written there in the capacity of a mother, is written on her own responsibility—whatever is done, is done for time, and for eternity.

There are cases occurring to all of us, perhaps, oftener than the day, in which we do not take the trouble to decide whether we are right or wrong, simply because we deem the occasion of too little consequence to merit any serious thought; or, at all events, even while we feel that we are a *little* wrong, we satisfy the claims of conscience by the plea that it is our custom—our habit—or a thing we must do, because we have always done it. But in the training of a child, this plea can never be allowed, if indeed it had been available before, because everything is of consequence then; and the sins of omission in that most trying process, tell as legibly upon the character under formation, as those which are more positive and direct.

From the duties of a mother there is then no escape; and hence it follows, that if ever, in the whole course of woman's life, she is called upon to think seriously, it is when she first becomes a parent. I cannot but suppose, however, that English mothers will most of them have learned to think seriously long before this period, except

indeed, in those lamentable cases, where the husband has chosen a companion for life, simply from the fancy of a moment — where the rose of a blooming cheek, the grace of a lovely form, or the sparkling pleasantry of an undisciplined spirit, have been presumed upon as guarantees for the happiness of a whole life.

Were I writing a book for the benefit of men instead of women, I might here enlarge upon the domestic calamities to which many have subjected themselves in consequence of making this kind of choice. I must confess that to me the spectacle of a silly mother surrounded by a family of children whom she has neither the skill to influence, nor the dignity to control, has always presented one of the most melancholy aspects of human life. But in whatever point of view this picture should be presented, it is more than probable that men would still go on to please themselves for the time being, regardless of ultimate vexation; and what is worse, it is equally probable, that they would still continue to charge the miseries of their own disappointment upon the whole female sex. Nor indeed would it be altogether politic, should we succeed in dissuading them from this generous system of protecting the helpless and incapable; because a heavy burden would then be

left upon society, of which it is now in a great measure relieved, by the preference of the stronger sex falling so charitably and so often upon the weakest of the weak. It is only on behalf of the rising generation that this preference is to be regretted; and the more so, that a strong stimulus is now withheld, which ought to be thrown on the side of mental and moral cultivation; for it is of no use attempting to draw a veil over the truth, that so long as women see their ignorance and folly not unacceptable to men, they will never strenuously endeavour to be wiser than they are.

Those luckless women who find themselves placed at the head of a family which they are expected to govern, without ever having learned, or even thought of, any mode of governing themselves, must be left almost entirely out of consideration in pursuing the course of reflection which is intended to occupy these pages. It is not certainly from choice that such pitiable creatures are placed beyond the pale of sympathy, for of all human beings, the mother who is expected to conduct a family without this preparation, has the most need of help from others. But the question naturally arises, when we think of such women—"How is it possible to help them?" The wayward whose will is at fault, and the simply uninformed

whose judgment has never been rightly directed, may both be assisted, when we labour to convince them of their errors; but the naturally weak—the incapable—what is to be done with them? Nothing, that I am aware of, but to commend them to the tender mercies of those protectors, who, having placed them in situations for which they were not fitted, are doubly bound not to leave them to bear unaided the consequences of an imprudence not wholly their own.

It is one feature in the case under consideration, and by no means a hopeful one, that notwithstanding all the evils arising out of the unfitness of silly women to undertake the duties of wives and mothers, there still prevails amongst men a popular outcry against women of an opposite character, as if to possess talent, was necessarily to be guilty of pretension; or as if to be imbecile, was necessarily to be amiable. Happily for men, and women too, but more happily for infancy than either, there is a wide range of intellect between the two extremes of wisdom and of folly; and it is to this class—to women of competent minds, desirous of turning their abilities to the best account, that I would venture chiefly to address myself; for if on the one hand, the absolutely weak would be incapable of profiting by such hints as I may be able to suggest,

those who are already wise, and consequently fitter than myself to discuss the important topics now under consideration, will, I hope, be willing to pardon me for transcribing for the sake of others, what they already know.

To persons of ordinary intellect then, to persons of fair and candid minds, but chiefly to such as feel their own deficiencies, and would be glad to profit by the experience and observation of others, I would, in the true spirit of charity, submit these pages, because it is to such I believe that the first experience of a mother's life will have many anxious feelings intermingled with its joys.

It is amongst this class especially, that I have imagined the first thoughts of a mother to wander back to her own childhood, and to take a serious and impartial survey of her own past life; to mark where she has fallen short, or gone astray, by what temptations she has been most frequently overcome, and which have been the weakest points in her own character. But above all, I have imagined that the Christian mother would by prayer, and heartfelt dedication, commend her child to the care and guidance of its Heavenly Father, in the hope that both it and its earthly parents might begin a new life more strictly devoted to his service and his glory.

It is scarcely possible to imagine a really impar-

tial and heart-searching review of the past to be entered into, by one whose mind has ever been seriously impressed with the nature and importance of religious truth, without a desire arising to make the kind of dedication here alluded to; but it is one of the constant besetments even of the rightly intentioned, and often of the truly convinced, to put off this great work until some vaguely anticipated era in our existence shall have marked the season of dedication with peculiar solemnity, or stamped the resolution with additional force. How often this era proves in the end to be the hour of irremediable sickness, it is not my business here to inquire; but certainly if the possibility of near and awful death, if the preparation for an event which in many cases has proved but a short passage to the grave—if a providential and merciful escape from the dangers of that trying hour—and if the important reality of entering at once as it were upon a new and a twofold existence—if all these circumstances combined be insufficient to constitute an era so important as that which is required for the date of a solemn dedication of the heart and the life to God, it is scarcely likely that human experience will ever afford the opportunity desired, and the inquiry necessarily follows in such a case, whether it is really desired at all.

It is by no means an unfrequent case, that as young people grow up, and find themselves either not quite so clever, or not quite so good as they expected and wished to be, they reflect either secretly or openly upon the management of their parents, who they believe might have made them better than they are. It is quite possible too that their parents may have been in fault; and that either from their own discrimination, or from the general advance of society towards a more enlightened state, they do actually see the defects of their own training, as those defects begin to tell upon their characters and conduct in riper years. All who have been led to think seriously on this subject, have probably felt this; but it is not all who have an opportunity of showing, how such defects may be remedied by training up others in a happier and wiser manner.

Again, we are all more or less beguiled into the belief that with us it is too late to make any serious alteration in the habits which mark our private lives. Indeed, the fact that they are habits, seems to stamp them with a kind of excusability, if I may be allowed the expression; though we lament over them in tones of contrition before our friends, and even believe in our own sincerity when we pray to have them forgiven. But if we can

thus excuse ourselves a few secretly cherished faults, and if we are sometimes content to pursue our earthly pilgrimage under the pressure of the burden of which we still complain, surely the mother, in contemplating the future character of her child, will not allow herself to suppose that the same plea will be available here. No; neither ignorance nor habit, those two strongholds of the human soul under which it so often takes refuge, fondly believing that they will cover a multitude of sins; neither the one, nor the other, will serve the mother's purpose now. What she has condemned in the management of her parents, she is bound the more scrupulously to avoid in her own—what she has grown too old to correct in herself, she has no excuse for not preventing in her child.

Beyond this, there is mixed up with many of the duties of advanced experience, a spirit of heaviness, a sense of depression owing to the many failures of youth's golden hopes—a fainting of the soul under the manifold conflicts it has had to wage, which though by no means beyond the reach of religious consolation to soothe and to alleviate, has a deadening effect upon the exercise of energy both in worldly and in spiritual things. Happily for the young life over which the mother watches, it knows no shadow from such clouds as

these. Youth enters freshly and gaily upon its untried career, and not all the failures of the thousands and tens of thousands who have already erred and strayed from the right path, have power to damp the ardour and the hope with which it eagerly pursues each object of desire. And how beautiful and encouraging to the time-worn parent is this fresh spring of existence, when her own has lost its elasticity and power! To her it may sometimes appear that scarcely anything in the world is worth the effort necessary to obtain it. But to her child how different! Supply but a sufficient motive, and the energy is there; point out a course of action, and the impulse is alive and present; direct to the attainment of an object, and the question never arises, as it does in after life, whether *it is worth while.* Why then should the mother not rejoice, when she has this new energy, this strong impulse, and this unquestioning ardour to work with, in preparing for the vicissitudes, as well as the enjoyments of after life? Why should the mother not rejoice, when all that has been exhausted in her own feeble frame, all that has been extinguished in her own waning mind, arises fresh and vigorous beneath her hand, and shoots forth into a new and hopeful existence, so bound up with her own, that while she gives

direction to each faculty, she may also derive encouragement and gladness from its healthy and successful exercise?

There are then many causes both in reason and in nature why the mother should rejoice; and perhaps it is this very rebounding of the heart back to all, and more than all, it has ever enjoyed in life and love, that constitutes in some measure the temptation to which an affectionate nature yields, so as to rest satisfied with the mere bodily health of a fondly treasured infant, with the amusements of the nursery, and with the first caresses of childhood, instead of looking beyond the present hour, or regarding it as a season of preparation for a future day. Thus time is trifled on. To avoid contradiction, and consequent distress, becomes the mother's only thought. The occupation of the hand seems to demand her whole attention, as another and another little body springs up to require her care; and the mind, the temper—in fact, the whole moral being, is thus set aside as a thing to be taken up again at some future time, when the child shall be sent to school, or committed to the care of a governess, to be made wise and good.

Now, it is quite evident to a mother of the

meanest capacity, that if the food of her infant was to be withheld, or rendered unwholesome for a single day, the body of the child would suffer; and it is a fact which cannot be too forcibly impressed upon all mothers, that the mind, even in its infant state, is deriving nourishment either of a healthy or an unhealthy nature from everything around it. Let the different effect upon the spirits of a child between a dull and a cheerful nurse be duly considered, and this fact will appear more plain. I am not absurd enough to suppose that the mind of an infant must be treated like that of a mature and rational being. All I would maintain is, that there are little dawnings of intelligence at a very early age, indications of temper, and symptoms of peculiar temperament, which ought to be watched, and either cherished or restrained, with as much assiduity as is generally bestowed upon the animal frame.

It is common too with mothers of the humblest capacity, as well as with the more enlightened, to observe with the most scrutinizing attention the bodily health of their children, believing that even where no disease exists, there may still be tendencies in the constitution, and liabilities to certain ailments, which maternal love is ever quick to

detect in their first appearance, and which the mother seldom spares either time or pains to arrest in their progress.

In a manner not the less certain, because it is less palpable, does the human mind bring along with it seeds of disease, individual tendencies, and peculiarities of nature, certainly not less important than those which belong more especially to the bodily frame. All these ought to be the care of the mother, to search for, to detect, and to turn into a healthy course; for as in her care of the animal frame, it is for the future that she watches, toils, and labours, in order that her offspring may be healthy, active, and fit for all the useful purposes of life; so it is for the future, and for one which extends far beyond what the body needs to be prepared for, that she has to cultivate the mind —the immortal nature of her child.

It is not for any of the purposes of to-day, or even of the coming morrow, that the infant is practised in the art of placing one foot before another, as in the act of walking. It is not for to-day that the child is encouraged to use its muscles, to grasp, and to appropriate whatever is within its reach, or at least whatever may be laid hold of without injury. If the present time was all we had to consider, most assuredly the less

grasping, and the less appropriation, the more easy and pleasant would be the office of the nurse. Instead, however, of consulting her own ease, the mother devotes herself with unremitting assiduity to the cultivation of the bodily faculties of her infant, so that none of its organic functions may suffer from the want of exercise. If she discovers the slightest tendency to the contraction of a muscle, or the distortion of a limb, her whole being is absorbed by apprehensions of the most distressing kind, and all her energies are directed to the means of averting the evils she anticipates for the future. Is it thus, I would ask, on the first discovery of a tendency to impatience, to contradiction, or to revenge? It is but too probable that every positive exhibition of these wrong tendencies is followed by an act of punishment proportioned to the good or evil temper of the nurse, just upon the old-fashioned principle that naughty children must be whipped; but as to the philosophy of such punishment, as well might a crooked limb be forcibly set straight every time it was seen out of place, as the perverse child be simply punished every time it did wrong.

There is no woman blind enough to suppose that in the case of the body, mere momentary correction will be of any lasting use; and why then

should the mind, or, in other words, the moral character of the child, be treated with less reasoning, and less calculation, than its animal frame?

It is possible, however, so far to extend our ideas into the future, as to lose sight of the intermediate space between the cradle and the grave. And where the mother is so deficient in knowledge of the world, and of human nature in general, as to be a stranger to that wide theatre of stirring interests which we call human life, it must of course be left to circumstances to mould the characters of her children. The result of which, in all probability, will be, that the accidents of life to them will be so various and unexpected, as to surprise them into acting very differently from what their parents had intended.

We cannot but suppose, however, that most women educated under ordinary circumstances, will have learned something of the world before being placed in the situation of mothers; and out of such knowledge arises a very natural and suitable inquiry, how the children under their care shall be best prepared for entering upon the world such as it is?—not merely for becoming portions of the general mass, for mixing themselves in with the elements of discord too frequently found there,

nor even for swelling the tide of popular feeling whatever it may be. All this they would learn too readily, if left to take their own course. But the inquiry a mother has to make is, what are the prevailing evils now existing in the world; what are the good tendencies of the present state of society; and by what means can the mind be so moulded, and the habits so formed, that the child going through the process of education, shall be best enabled to assist in counteracting the one, and helping forward the other?

These are serious inquiries, well worthy a mother's attention, and requiring, in order to act upon them to any useful purpose, much of that observation and tact which has been already urged upon women at an earlier stage of their experience. And here I would venture to observe, that everything which appeared to me essential to a woman holding the relative situation of a daughter, appeared so more especially when contemplating the same character in that of a wife or a mother; nor could any faculty of the mind be recommended in its exercise to a young and single woman, which might not be made a hundred-fold more valuable to her as a mother.

Whence then can have arisen that most absurd and infatuated notion, that women while young

and unmarried, may with propriety cultivate her mind and improve her character to almost any extent; but that as a wife she has no need to advance any farther, and as a mother she will do very well if she can but superintend the dressing and undressing of a baby! If, as regards the female sex, there should ever have been ground for the establishment of so erroneous a belief, one would suppose that the simple fact of mothers having the training of boys, as well as girls, committed to their care, might sometimes startle them into a consciousness of the vast amount of responsibility resting upon them. That single thought, so alarming in its spirit-stirring interest,—that all the statesmen of the rising generation, all the ministers of religion, all public and private gentlemen, as well as all men of business, mechanics, and labourers of every description, will have received, as regards intellectual and moral character, their first bias, and often their strongest and their last, from the training and the influence of a mother, is a consideration which cannot be too deeply impressed even upon the minds of the young, for it is the young more especially who have it in their power to profit by such thoughts; and though none could be more unwilling than the writer of these pages, to fill the imagination of a girl

with premature ideas of her own importance, in reference to the future, yet I still believe, that a prospective view of their own responsibilities, properly placed before them, would tend very much to counteract the injurious effects of those trifling and vulgar anticipations of courtship and marriage, which too frequently interfere with the intellectual improvement of the young, and effectually destroy the true dignity of woman.

We know that the farther a nation advances in civilization, in science, and in general knowledge, the more intelligence, wisdom, and forethought is required of those who hold the reins of government, and direct the management of institutions for the public good; and what nobler ambition can fill the hearts of British women, than that the next generation of their countrymen should be better grounded in the principles of true knowledge than the last? But, striking and impressive as this idea justly appears in its immediate import, that of the education of daughters is at least as much so in its remoter tendency, because it is to women that we still must look for the training of future generations, and the formation of characters whose names may be surrounded by a glory, or stamped with a blot, in the history of ages yet to come.

And are not these profound and stirring

thoughts for the mother, in her hours of retirement and repose? The human mind, naturally prone to wander beyond the sphere of actual knowledge, becomes lost in a cloud of vague uncertainties, whenever it takes too bold a flight; but here is a field for noble aspirations, in which it is not only lawful, but perfectly reasonable, to indulge; and not the loftiest ambition that ever fired a hero's breast, could be so ardent or so high as that which it is both natural and right for the fond mother to cherish in her "heart of hearts." Yes, it is a great and a glorious thought, that the being whose young life is now so tenderly bound up with hers, that not a chord of one can thrill with the minutest touch of feeling, but an answering tone is echoed by the other; that this frail and helpless being, so delicate, so pure, and so beautiful to her, may one day be swelling the ranks of the church-militant on earth, and may eventually join the anthems of triumphant joy which celebrate the admission of the saints to their eternal rest in heaven.

Thus far I have purposely confined my observations chiefly to a mother's *thoughts*. Beyond this, the outer court of the temple of maternal love, lies the inner sanctuary of a mother's *feelings*, whose holy secrets no inexperienced hand should

presume to touch. It must be observed, however, that within this sanctuary, and out of these holy secrets, arises the natural spring of all her influence, and of all her power. Assisted only by the force of reason and of principle, a stranger might conduct the steps of childhood to maturity, as well as the mother herself; but in the maternal bosom, as has already been observed, is lodged an instinct stronger than any other which is associated with animal existence; and the tendency of these pages will be to show, that wherever there is a strong feeling, there is, if rightly exercised, and under favourable circumstances, a proportionate degree of power, and that wherever there is power, there is an equal amount of responsibility.

CHAP. II.

AUTHORITY, INFLUENCE, AND EXAMPLE.

It is a great point gained in studying the true "science of life," to know when to be little, and when to be great. In venturing to write upon the duties of woman as a wife, I have been charged with wishing to place her in too low a scale. Perhaps I have not been so fortunate as to make my ideas fully understood; for although I still think that as a wife, woman should place herself, instead of running the risk of *being placed,* in a secondary position; as a mother, I do not see how it is possible for her to be too dignified, or to be treated with too much respect.

Yet it is of the utmost importance to those who undertake the management of children, that they should have clear ideas of the difference betwixt authority and influence, and of the necessary dependence of both upon example.

Although strictly speaking there can be no such thing as authority without influence, yet when we speak of authority simply as such, we mean nothing more than that there exists for the time-being a power in one party to enforce a command, and a willingness in the other to obey. There are kind and gentle mothers who think that authority has little or nothing to do with the education of their children; and there are on the other hand persons educated in the old schools, who consider authority as the only instrument they have to work with, in producing the effect which mental and moral discipline are desired to produce upon the young. It is common with individuals of the latter class to speak of "breaking the natural will," as if the will was an excrescence which had to be removed, or a branch which had to be lopped off, before any good could be expected to be done. Hence those horrible whippings of former times, those shuttings up in dark chambers, and those other varieties of mental and bodily punishment, all which had about as much efficacy in softening the natural temper, and subduing the spirit of pride, as the sprinkling on of water has in the extinguishing of burning coals. Indeed, one can scarcely imagine anything more congenial to the formation of desperate and malignant resolutions, than to be forcibly snatched

up, as some of us can remember to have been, thrust struggling into a dark and unoccupied room, and there locked up, and left, so that, scream as we would, and few under such circumstances would not do their best, the sound of our distress was beyond the reach of any human ear.

Happily for the human race, however, these times are past, and the too severe application of direct and unsparing punishment is not the fashion of the present day. I say *happily* for the human race, because it is not possible for the most unbounded indulgence, as a system, to produce consequences so lamentable in their general effects, as a system of harshness and severity practised upon the tender and susceptible nature of youth. To those kind and gentle mothers who consider mere authority as too stern an instrument to work with in the training up of their children, we must then in justice grant, that theirs is the lesser evil of the two.

Where this evil on the mother's part arises from excessive tenderness, and unwillingness to give pain, it will perhaps be a little startling to hear it asserted, that if she set herself to devise a plan for ensuring the future misery of her child, next in degree of efficacy, though widely different in nature, to that which has already been alluded to, she could not find one more effec-

tual than that of neglecting to instil into its mind the necessity of implicit obedience. Once convinced of this necessity, which it easily may be, by never being allowed to call in question the authority of those under whose care it is placed, the child grows up without the least idea that the rule of obedience is a hardship, or in fact without any idea of obedience at all; for it submits habitually to rightful authority, just as we submit every day to those circumstances over which we have no control. In this manner the habit of submitting the natural will is imperceptibly acquired, a world of fruitless and painful contention is avoided, and the child really enjoys the advantage of being constantly under the direction of wisdom, forethought, and experience, superior to its own.

The maintenance of this unyielding authority on the part of the mother, requires, it would seem, some little tact and skill; for some who are the most imperative in their commands, are in reality the least obeyed. That hasty slaps, loud talking, and harsh words, have nothing whatever to do with the system of discipline here recommended, it is scarcely necessary to say; neither that weakest and most fruitless sort of pleading, which consists of a perpetual repetition of "Now do," and "Now don't;" and still less do threatenings and bribes

enter into the scheme proposed; but a steady and consistent method begun in early infancy, and never on any occasion whatever departed from, of requiring obedience to the parent's wishes, simply as such, accompanied by a strict regard to clearness, consistency, and truth, in making those wishes known.

To a child trained up in this manner, obedience is so easy, that it no more thinks of questioning the mother's right to direct its actions, than it quarrels with the nurse because she stretches out her arms to prevent its falling. Nor is there more severity in the exercise of such authority, than in the protecting care which preserves an infant from corporeal harm. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of the whims and wishes of a child, would, if it were possible to gratify them, be productive of more pain than pleasure; and thus it is necessary, even for its happiness, that they should be subjected to the decision of another. Let the little hero, before he is able to walk, thrust away the hand of the nurse as he will, she suffers no symptoms of vexation on his part to prevent her necessary assistance, because she knows, and in this she judges for herself without consulting him, that the child would be more hurt by a fall, than by being the subject of a mere momentary

vexation. And the mother knows, or rather she ought to know, that upon the same principle her child would suffer more by discovering that he had the power to contradict and oppose his mother's wishes, than by being deprived of some little gratification of fancy or desire, which in all probability would please him only for a moment.

By the habit of obedience too, when practised towards a judicious and consistent mother, the child soon learns, as if by a sort of instinct, what is the general nature of its mother's wishes, so that it will often combine the pleasure of anticipating them, with the duty of compliance.

All weak persons unacquainted with the world, and disappointed in their own experience, are naturally miserable when unsupported, and left to themselves. What then must be the suffering of a child whose own will is its only law, and who has not learned what is right and wrong, nor even what is possible and impossible to be had, or done? We see its sufferings written on its anxious irritated countenance. We behold in its manner, alternately irresolute and determined, the caprice and waywardness by which it is disturbed. We hear the agony of its disappointment after each successive attempt to do what was impracticable, or what was fraught with danger and pain; and we ask of

the mother, in common kindness, to establish for her child a rule of safety and of peace, and to let that rule be—implicit obedience to her own authority.

It is distressing, even to the casual observer, to mark, in the impatient, feverish, irritable character of such a child, the wretchedness which is preparing for it in after life; and not in after life alone, for each day is fraught with suffering to the little being who is thus allowed to be a law unto itself, before it has the means of understanding what is right or safe, pleasant or possible, to possess. Yes, we can many of us feelingly attest what it was to spend a day—and happy for those with whom a day was all—in company with the child who was suffered to crush the hot patty into its mouth, to make tea for its mamma, and consequently to pour the scalding water upon its breast, to climb the edge of the round table upon which soup had been placed, to burn its fingers by roasting its own apple at the fire, to eat more at every meal than it had power to digest, and to allay the cravings of a diseased appetite by having one hand perpetually supplied with sugar-candy, and the other with sweet-cake; to finish all, by sitting up late at night because it did not choose to go to bed. Nor need we add to this catalogue those offences

of which the child takes no cognizance, such as gingerbread stuck upon the visiter's chair, and butter smeared upon her dress; nor those dreadful eruptions of passion and distress which take place whenever offences abound, so that the parents, or perhaps an irritated father, thinks it necessary to *correct* the child, as it is called. Neither is it necessary to dwell upon the multiplication of these evils where the family is numerous, and confusion is consequently worse confounded. I would only add, that to all these, and more a hundredfold, the fond mother has subjected her children, from failing to enforce the simple and pleasant duty of implicit obedience, which would have made all things comparatively easy. Not that I am visionary enough to assert that wherever authority is consistently maintained there will be at all times, and on the instant, a willing obedience, with an absence of wrong tempers, feverish ailments, and perverseness of disposition; but I am confident in asserting, that the greatest kindness we can do to a helpless, ignorant, and inexperienced being, is to furnish it with a guide upon which it may safely and implicitly depend, and that this guide to a child ought to be the undisputed authority of its parents, or of those whom they may deem worthy of being deputed to act in their stead.

Then again it is *prompt* obedience that is required, for no other will answer the end of producing family concord, and individual satisfaction. A lingering, pleading, lengthened-out dispute, betwixt the mother and the child, even when the mother gains the mastery in the end, is the very opposite in its results to what all rational parents would desire; and the little girl who keeps her nurse waiting for her a whole hour, because she intreats her mother every ten minutes that she may stay up a little longer, has to be carried off to bed at nine o'clock, with as much screaming and opposition as there would have been at eight, and with the additional injury to her health and temper, of having suffered the loss of her natural rest; with the still worse addition of having discovered, that by pleading and coaxing she can overcome her mother's influence, and set aside her determination to enforce what is right.

Habit, which is said to be second nature with all, is almost more than that, with children. Thus the habit of resisting and disputing authority, by whatever means it may be done, lets in a tide of evil consequences not to be arrested by any occasional resumption of the power which has been voluntarily resigned. The maintenance of autho-

rity is like the preservation of a string of beads—break but the "silken cord on which they hang," and the pearls are scattered in disorder, if not irretrievably lost. By suffering the rule of obedience to be set aside, an endless catalogue of evil tempers, vexations, disappointments, artifices, mean subterfuges, and even the worst of all bribery—the bribery of self-interested endearments—are allowed to take the place of that steady, calm, and undeviating submission, which costs no pain, and requires no sacrifice, simply because it is habitual.

There is no spectacle in life more deplorable, and few more calculated to awaken feelings of contempt, than that of an undisciplined and pettish temper fretting against and resisting what is inevitable; and yet all this folly, as well as the suffering with which it is always associated, is necessarily consequent upon that error in the management of childhood, which allows of rightful authority being made the subject of resistance and dispute. On the other hand, we never contemplate human nature in a more noble or dignified position, than when, under the dispensation of Divine, and consequently indisputable power, it yields a willing and prompt obedience.

It may be said that the obedience of a child to those who superintend its infant years, has nothing

whatever to do with the submission of beings more rational and mature to laws which they acknowledge to be divine; but I am fully persuaded that the habit of rebellion against human authority, allowed in early life, will render the habit of submission to a higher Power of more difficult attainment in after years; while, on the other hand, the same proportion of opposite results will follow from a prompt and undeviating subjection of the weaker to the stronger, during those early stages of existence when it is impossible that the reasons for enforcing a parent's commands should be fully understood.

Amongst the records preserved to us of the dealings of God with man in the early history of the world, nothing is more striking than the manner in which this principle of unquestioning obedience was enforced. Until the rule of simple obedience was acknowledged, nothing could be done towards the development of those higher principles which were afterwards to enlighten and regenerate mankind. It was the entire submission of the ignorant to the wise, of the weak to the strong, of the erring to the stedfast, of the guilty to the stainless and pure, that was required before any more profound and expansive system of discipline could be brought to operate upon the different characters

and habits of mankind; and although the child will soon, too soon, discover that its earthly parent is not so perfect as its young affection had taught it to believe, still, until it can bring into competition with that parent an equal amount of ability to discern betwixt the evil and the good, it ought never to be permitted to feel that there is a way of escape from the rule of implicit obedience.

And this obedience, I repeat, may be rendered as easy as it is to submit to the darkness of night at a certain hour, or to the cold of winter at a certain season of the year. We do not often see children go into convulsions of rage because a shower of rain is falling, and thus preventing their expected walk. Convince them that it actually does rain, and, feeling that the calamity, though great, is inevitable, they submit accordingly, and often return with a cheerfulness which might instruct their seniors, to the amusements or occupations which they had been busy with before. In this case they submit without murmuring, because they know that no pleading of theirs, no coaxing, no bribery, ever did make the rain cease at their bidding; and there is no doubt but they would evince the same prompt and cheerful submission to parental authority, if it was exercised in a consistent and undeviating manner.

It is true we sometimes hear a short and sudden sigh from the child who is called away at a certain hour to leave a flattering circle in the drawing-room, for the obscurity of the nursery, and I am far from supposing that habitual obedience never costs an effort at the moment it is required; but I speak of the effort as one which by *comparison* is reduced to almost nothing; and I appeal for the truth of this assertion to the cheerfulness, serenity, and absence of unnecessary disappointment, observable in children who are brought up under that system of unquestioning obedience, which is the only true foundation of all discipline in the management of children, of all social comfort in their homes, and of all satisfaction to those who have the trouble and anxiety of watching over them.

Although the exercise of that authority which is here so earnestly recommended, might seem, from its direct and undeviating character, to be one of the easiest things in the world, it is, as has already been observed, one of the most difficult consistently to carry out; because the natural weakness of the mother's heart is ever tempting her to risk the future good of her child, for the sake of its immediate gratification. And here, if ever, we see the necessity there is for women to attain that

self-mastery, and to cultivate that moral courage, without which they are incapable of working out any lasting good by their influence over others.

It is that little sigh we have just alluded to, that appealing look perhaps through the mist of tears, or, more than all, that sweet spirit of resignation with which the child throws up its game not yet played out, and turns to hang upon the neck of its nurse, which melts the mother's firmness, and makes her determine that, for once at least, its unresisting compliance shall be rewarded by a deviation from the accustomed rule. Thus the poor child learns how to appeal another time. It learns to anticipate these deviations, and to consider itself aggrieved when they are not allowed. Thus, in short, the silken cord is broken, and the pearls lie scattered.

Thus too we see, that however devoted to the happiness of her children the fond mother may be, however amiable herself, however well-intentioned with regard to the performance of her maternal duties, there must be in her management of a family a prospective reference to the future, a calculation as to cause and effect, and a power of self-government, so as in all things to make the lesser subservient to the greater good; all which an education of accomplishments, and a youth of

visiting and vanity, are but little calculated to supply. It remains therefore to be the more earnestly urged upon the mothers of England, that so far as they are able, they should look well to these things, and endeavour to obviate, in the education of their children, the evils they have to deplore in their own.

Our next subject of consideration is influence, and here we come at once to the great secret of woman's power in her social and domestic character. By absolute and mere authority it is little indeed that woman can do, because the weakness of her bodily frame, and the natural susceptibility of her feelings, render her wholly unfit for wielding the weapon of authority to any useful purpose, and especially in her management of boys. Indeed it is a sight most pitiful to contemplate, where a poor feeble mother unsupported by any moral or intellectual influence, deals out amongst her unheeding children, alternate slaps and thrusts, accompanied by the tone and language of command, without its apparently anticipated results; while she wonders in her own mind, and sometimes inquires of her friends, how it can be that her children are more rebellious than others, though undergoing either scolding or chastisement every day of their lives. Such for the most part is the situation of woman when

attempting to exercise authority without having obtained influence; for though authority alone may be made available in the management of infancy, no sooner is the discovery made, that the requisites for maintaining influence are wanting in the mother, than she becomes in some degree an object of contempt, and her commands are consequently set at nought.

It is just possible that there should be amongst women some of those stern, cold, commanding characters, to which authority, simply as such, appropriately belongs. Happily, however, such mothers are but rarely found, and, where they are, present a strange deviation from the usual course of nature, the contemplation of which has the effect of making us admire the more the harmony and beauty of that course as it most uniformly flows.

If, however, authority belongs as a natural right to such characters, the finer and more vital elements of moral influence never can be theirs; and to imagine the tenderness of childhood committed to a mother of this description, is to call up a picture too revolting for the mind to dwell upon without shrinking and horror. Such a mother may possibly govern the actions of her children by the exercise of absolute power, but she can never know

the sweet security of moral influence, which operates as effectually when distant and unseen, as when every act of youth is watched by the most scrutinizing eye.

At the root of all good influence is example. The conduct, mind, and spirit of the mother give a tone to that domestic atmosphere by which the soul in its early experience is sustained. Where that atmosphere is impregnated with the elements of discord, arising from the rude passions and wrong tempers of the parents, and of the household in general, it is impossible that the spirit of childhood should be kept in a healthy state: nor even where the members of a family are addicted to melancholy and reserve, can the younger branches be said to exist in a genial or wholesome air.

It has been beautifully observed by the author of Home Education, a book which all mothers ought to read, that "the recollection of a thoroughly happy childhood—other advantages not wanting—is the very best preparation, moral and intellectual, with which to encounter the duties and cares of real life. A sunshine childhood is an auspicious inheritance, with which, as a fund, to commence trading in practical wisdom and active goodness. It is a great thing only to have known by experience that tranquil, temperate felicity is

actually attainable on earth. How many have pursued a reckless course, because, or chiefly because, they early learned to think of happiness as a chimera, and believed momentary gratification to be the only substitute placed within the reach of man. Practicable happiness is much oftener thrown away than really snatched from us; but it is the most likely to be pursued, overtaken, and husbanded, by those who already, and during some considerable period of their lives, have been happy. To have known nothing but misery, is the most portentous condition under which human nature can pursue its course."

It is a fact universally acknowledged, that the healthy tone of the domestic atmosphere, as well as the general cheerfulness of the household, depend very much upon the mother. In her capacity of a wife, and mistress of a family, she is the one responsible being for the general arrangement and combination of the different elements of social and domestic comfort. She is the arbiter in all trivial disputes, the soother of all jarring and discord, the explainer of all misunderstandings, and, in short, the mainspring of the machinery by which social and domestic happiness is constantly supplied, both in her household, and within the circle she adorns.

We cannot perhaps better describe the effect of moral atmosphere upon the mind, than by that of a pleasant or unpleasant day spent in the country, upon the bodily frame. Upon the health and spirits of some individuals, the weather has at all times a powerful effect; but while earnestly pursuing our accustomed avocations, more especially as they are now generally pursued in busy towns, we have little time to think about the weather, or to yield ourselves to the sensations it is calculated to excite. But when we go out from home for the purpose of enjoying an excursion, the case is widely different. With a cold east wind blowing full in our faces, and a thick canopy of clouds obscuring the sun, we look in vain for beauty or gladness either in the earth or sky; and, sinking into a gloomy sort of silence, we think only of the rheumatism which seems to be twitching at every limb, of the friend we have left behind as the only companion we really cared for, or of the clothing and provisions we have happened to bring, as being the least suitable in every respect for a cold day in the country. Arrived at the place of destination, our feet are benumbed with cold; the grass is yet damp with the last night's rain; a general shivering, with an impulse to get away, creeps over us; we grow caustic

and bitter in our remarks; and finally end the day with the commencement of a severe cold.

When the same party—precisely the same in number, character, and means of enjoyment—set out on the same excursion in beautiful weather, how different are their bodily sensations, and consequently the tone of every mind! The scenery through which they pass is the same in every respect, except that the *atmosphere* is changed. A balmy air breathes over them, laden with the odours of fresh opening flowers, sunshine smiles upon every object, and, as they pass along, vexations, disappointments, and drawbacks to enjoyment, are all forgotten. What, if the friend who had promised to accompany them be left behind; they feel no want of him. What, if their viands are the homeliest or the least approved; their appetites, sharpened beyond their usual vigour, are equal to the provision made for them, whatever that may be. As to rheumatism, they forget that ever it assailed their peace, while influenza and ague are calamities, the mention of which awakens only a smile. It is especially on such days that charity abounds, that benevolence embraces those whom it would have spurned before; that ambition, wealth, and fame, become as nothing in com-

parison with good humour and good will; and all things being blended happily together by the magical influence of what is called a pleasant day, the party return to their homes with health and energies renewed, and not unfrequently both better and wiser than when they first went out.

It must be remembered that the sensations here described, are continued only for a day; whereas those with whom we live, and especially those with whom we associate in early life, affect us by their influence and example perhaps for many years.

I repeat, then, it is to woman that we look for so directing the various capabilities with which she is naturally endowed, as to create around her a moral atmosphere, as powerful in its effect upon the mind, as that which has just been described is upon the body, and consequently upon both.

Much has been said, and justly, of the importance to women, of good talents, and well-cultivated minds; yet it must be allowed that not always do the wisest women, nor unfortunately the most pious, make the best mothers. A simple straightforward character will sometimes evince infinitely more skill in the management of children, than some of those whose minds are stored with systems of education. The fact is, these systems, unless naturally and appropriately conducted, are not

intelligible to children. The aim and object of the mother remains a mystery to them, while they distinctly feel, and long remember, all that is disagreeable in the mode of administering the elaborate, and to them incomprehensible, discipline to which they are subjected.

The wisest women are not always best acquainted with the language of infant thought, nor is it the most pious who are quickest to detect the indications of peculiar character and temperament in early life. It is a lamentable fact, that half the excellent advice of good people addressed to children, as well as to the illiterate and the poor, falls from their lips unheeded, for want of being adapted to the understandings and habits of their hearers. "To-morrow is my birth-day," said a little girl of my acquaintance to a friend who had placed her on his knee. "Shall I come and help you to keep it?" asked the gentleman. "Oh!" replied the child, with the utmost astonishment, "we don't keep it. It goes away again directly." Now, if in so common and familiar an expression as that of *keeping a birthday,* there could be so total a want of understanding betwixt the two parties referred to, how often must such misapprehensions take place on subjects less familiar, and in themselves less comprehensible, to the young!

It is thus that the highly gifted, whose ideas are accustomed to flow through lofty or intricate channels, so often fail to produce the anticipated results in their tuition of the young; while persons with common abilities, and simplicity of character, are frequently able to engage their attention, and obtain their confidence, simply from the fact of their being understood. Thus, then, we clearly perceive, that in our means of conveying instruction to children, there must be a certain degree of adaptation to the germs of thought and feeling already beginning to unfold themselves in their characters. There must be adaptation to their half-formed impressions, and to the limited scope of their ideas, in order to our certainty that their mental faculties are going along with us in our efforts to impart instruction.

But far beyond this, in our endeavours to obtain influence, is the power of sympathizing with those whom we would instruct or guide; and in this instance, above all others, we see that from her natural endowments, especially from her capability both for profound and lively sympathy, woman is admirably fitted for the part she has to fill in social life. If influence be the secret of her power, sympathy is the secret of her influence, —sympathy with nature in its trials, temptations,

sufferings, and enjoyment, experienced in a degree far beyond what man is either fitted for, or capable of affording.

It is of the highest importance, too, that this sympathy should be exhibited through the medium of tenderness, so as to inspire a confidence, on the part of the young, in the mother's undeviating desire to promote their happiness. A single suspicion that she prefers her own good to that of others; but, above all, that she prefers giving pain to giving pleasure, or finding fault to expressing approbation, is just so much weight taken from her good influence—just so much impulse given to rebellion or contempt.

How beautiful, then, in its adaptation to the situation in which she is placed, and the duties she has to perform, is that instinct of maternal love, which, from its intensity and depth, its all-pervading and inextinguishable vitality, so lives and breathes through every act, thought, word, and look of the fond mother, that sooner would her infant doubt its own existence, than question that of her untiring love. And thanks be to the Author of all our blessings! this unbounded supply, which no reasoning, and no power of mere human agency could create, is never wanting in the mother's hour of need. That she has her hour of need, none can

dispute, who know anything of the care of infancy and childhood. Yes, she has it in sickness, when her feeble strength is exhausted, and yet she watches on. She has it in poverty, when hunger craves the bread she is breaking into little eager hands. She has it, when, night after night, she is called up from her downy pillow to still the impatient cry. She has it, when, in after years, there comes not the full measure of affection which she had expended, back into her own bosom. And she has it, when disease has crushed the beauty of her opening flower, or when she looks into the casket of her infant's mind, and finds that the gem is wanting there. Yet, under all these circumstances, when money cannot bribe attention, when friendship cannot purchase care, when entreaties cannot ensure the necessary aid, the mother is rich in resources, and untiring in effort, simply because her love is of that kind which cannot fail.

To a certain extent—and would that for the sake of kind but injudicious mothers it were farther than it is!—the mere conviction of this love existing in the mother's heart, will ensure a corresponding degree of influence. But no sooner do children begin to think, to compare, and to judge for themselves—and they are sometimes better judges than we suppose—no sooner do they begin

to form an estimate of their mother's mind, of her sense, or her want of sense, than these ideas mix themselves with that of her affection, and her influence is then submitted to a new, and infinitely more trying test.

Children seldom love long those whom they are unable to respect, and thus a fond and foolish mother invariably brings upon herself the neglect, and often the contempt, of her family. I knew a fine boy, just emerging from childhood, who whispered to a little playmate the discovery he had made, that his mother was, to use his own expression, "quite a simpleton." The mingling of tenderness with shame, in the manner in which he communicated this lamentable fact, did honour both to his head and heart; and could the mother have known or understood the melancholy blank which succeeded to the warmest admiration in the mind of her boy, and the hard struggles he had afterwards to wage betwixt his affection and his contempt, she would surely have regretted, even if she had done nothing more, the many opportunities which had been wasted in early life, for cultivating her understanding, and rendering her talents more worthy of respect.

There must then be a blending of confidence with esteem, in the feelings of the child, in order

to ensure a lasting influence to the mother—of confidence founded upon a conviction of her sympathy and love, and of esteem for her own character, both in an intellectual and moral point of view.

On the subject of example, much more remains to be said, when that of religious influence shall come under consideration; but it is, perhaps, most in keeping with the observations already made, to remind the reader here, that there is a bad, as well as a good, influence—that influence there must be, of one kind or other, arising out of the close connection and constant association of the mother and the child; and that where good sense, and good principle, are wanting in the mother's conduct, the absence of these essentials to good influence, especially the latter, will, in all probability, tell upon the characters of her children in after life to an alarming extent. In vain might such a mother train her children according to the most approved and best established rules. In vain might she admonish them, though in the language of sincerity and love. In vain might she lay down for them a system of the purest morals, or even preach to them a holier law derived from the Bible itself. The unsophisticated mind, and clear discriminating eye of childhood, are not to be thus deceived. Long before a child knows how to

make use of the words consistency and truth, it possesses a discerning spirit, to perceive where consistency is deviated from, where truth is violated; and when this is the case in the conduct of the mother, what hold can she possibly have upon the confidence and esteem of her children?

We should remember, too, that impressions are with children the data from which they afterwards reason; and long before they are capable of what may be strictly denominated conviction, they have in all probability received impressions never to be effaced. Could we look into the mind of a child, and examine the tablet of its memory, we should see by that faithful record, that each day had produced a particular set of impressions, even at a very early age. We discover this from their prattle in their waking hours, and often from the image which evidently flits before their mental vision, when they lie down to sleep. It is, therefore, by impressions chiefly, that the mother has to work; and well is it for her, and for all who have to do with the management of children, if, while delivering lectures to them upon what is right and wrong, they do not receive the impression that it is very tedious and very disagreeable to be instructed how to be good. Well too, if, while the mother is most careful to instil into their minds by verbal instruc-

tion, all manner of good principles, they do not, from her conduct, receive the impression that these things may be well enough for little boys and girls, but that one of the great privileges of men and women is to be able to do without them. Yet, if such be the power of influence on the side of bad example, what must it be where there exists a perfect harmony between the character and conduct of the mother, and the lessons she endeavours to inculcate; or rather, where the lessons themselves, few, and short, and perfectly adapted to the understanding of childhood, are but a commentary upon her own life, and that of her husband?

So much has been said, and so beautifully, on the subject of female influence, in a work entitled "Woman's Mission," that were I to yield to the temptation of quoting from its eloquent pages, I might easily be led on to transcribe the whole. I will, however, content myself with a passage from a French writer,* whose authority is frequently referred to in that volume, where he says, "It is of the utmost consequence to remark, that in children, sentiment precedes intelligence; the first answer to the maternal smile is the first dawn of intelligence; the first sensation is the responding caress. Comprehension begins in feeling; hence,

* Amié Martin.

to her who first arouses the feelings, who first awakens the tenderness, must belong the happiest influences. She is not, however, to teach virtue, but to inspire it. This is peculiarly the province of woman. What she wishes us to be, she begins by making us love, and love begets unconscious imitation. What is a child in relation to a tutor? An ignorant being whom he is called upon to instruct. What is a child in relation to a mother? An immortal being, whose soul it is her business to train for immortality. Good schoolmasters make good scholars,—good mothers make good men; here is the difference of their missions."

Few subjects are more hackneyed, or more common to all writers, than that of maternal influence. Perhaps it may be one of those, which, admitting of no question, and incapable of arousing systematic opposition, wants the interest of perpetual excitement, which party-feeling gives to so many others less worthy of regard. It is not, like too much of the religion of the world, kept alive by the activity of contention for those points upon which it is possible to disagree, and only dormant with regard to others upon which all are of one mind; for on the subject of maternal influence, nature, reason, and religion speak ever the same language, and would equally disown a violation of this great moral law. Yet as a

strange anomaly presented by human life, there are women, and kind and well-meaning women too, who seem not to be aware that the sacred name of mother entails upon them an amount of responsibility proportioned to the influence which it places in their hands. There are mothers, and not a few, who appear to consider themselves called upon to do anything, rather than attend to the training of their children; who find time for morning calls, when they have none for the nursery or the school-room; and even make the dresses of their infants, rather than answer questions dictated by their opening minds.

It has often been said that no man, however depraved or vicious, need be utterly despaired of, with whom his mother's influence still lingers on the side of virtue. On the couch of sickness, the battle-field, and even the gloomy scaffold, it is the image of his mother which still haunts the memory of the dying man; and in the hour of strong temptation, when guilty comrades urge the treacherous or the bloody deed, it is to forget the warning of his mother's voice, that the half-persuaded victim drinks a deeper draught.

If in scenes like these a mother's influence is the last preserving link, how sweetly does it operate

when life is new, and experience yet unsullied by any deep or lasting stains! How sweetly does it operate, like a kind of second conscience, more tender, more forgiving, yet still more appealing than the first, in all those minor perplexities and trials of human life, where judgment, bribed by inclination, would persuade the unpractised traveller that the most flowery path must surely be the best! It is in the beginning, and the end of evil, that this power, though often unseen, and purely spiritual, operates with a potency peculiarly its own—in the beginning, to win us back by that simple and habitual reference of a child to what would have been its mother's choice; and in the end, by that last lingering of expiring hope—that hovering, as it were, around our pillow, of some kind angel, reminding us at once of the tenderness of earthly love, and of the efficacy of that which is divine.

There seems to be connected with the human mind, and almost essential to its wants in this probationary state, an idea of the protection of some guardian spirit always near, whose peculiar care we have the happiness to be; and the closest resemblance we find in reality to this consoling and delightful thought, is the influence of a

mother, often felt more powerfully when absent, than when under the inspection of her ever watchful eye. Nor can change of scene or lapse of time obliterate the impression, simply because it was the first, and made at a time when the heart was a tender and willing recipient to the impress of affection. Thus it visits the rude sailor on the stormy deep, in the long watches of the night; it travels with the pilgrim through the desert, and cheers him in the stranger's home; and if it does not check the man of worldly calculations when tempted to defraud, it sometimes brings him on his couch of nightly rest, to question whether he has done right. It gives music to the voice of fame, when it echoes on a mother's ear; sweetness to the bridal wreath, when a mother binds it on a daughter's brow; honour to the dignity, a mother showed us how to wear; and value to the wealth, a mother taught us how to use.

I speak not from experience, for to me the precious link was broken before I felt its power, or could appreciate its worth; but if an aching want of that which nature pines for, if a dim vision of unseen beauty haunting perpetually the path of life, if a standard of perfect though unknown excellence imparting stability and form to the

hope of its existence on earth ;—if all these give a title to describe the value of a mother's influence, then, from the recollections of a desolate childhood, uncherished by maternal tenderness, surely I may speak, and not in vain.

CHAP. III.

THE USE OF A MIND.

It is the fashion of the present day to direct every means, and to force every effort, to some obvious and immediate result. Thus education has come to be regarded as a process by which the mind is filled, rather than one by which it is exercised in the use of its faculties.

Education is also too frequently considered as a thing which can be compressed into almost any given space of time, by dint of labour and industry; and thus parents who indulge a foolish ambition to see their children pushed on to be clever, make it a practice to stipulate, in sending them to school, that they shall learn everything within the compass of human attainment, except how to use their minds. They complain, too, sometimes, of the high terms of education; and various modes of bargaining, and bringing down those of the different schools to which they apply, are resorted to,

with little compunction on the part of parents. Yet when we consider the situation of those who have to receive under their care children who have scarcely been prepared for the process of instruction by one useful habit, or one rational idea; when we consider, too, that in the course of a very few years, perhaps two or three, the habits they have acquired have to be uprooted, an entirely new foundation of moral and intellectual character laid, and upon this a superstructure erected, composed of every branch of learning, and adorned with every accomplishment, and all this with but slender capacity on the part of the child, and no desire whatever to be anything but well dressed, well fed, and exceedingly comfortable; I would ask, what money could repay the labour of converting a succession of such children, year after year, into what are called highly educated men and women? and even if by dint of indefatigable effort on the part of those who teach, there should now and then be one child sent home with a memory loaded to excess—nay, literally crammed with names and dates, and all that is comprised under the head of school-learning—how few, even out of this small number, find, in the common walks of life, a use for half the acquirements they have so laboriously attained!

I speak not as wishing to reduce the compass of human learning within a narrower circle than it fills at present. Far from it. My idea is, that we never can learn too much, provided that in the acquirement of one thing, we do not neglect another more important; and there will always be, amongst the many, some minds sufficiently gifted, and comprehensive, to profit by and repay an extreme amount of culture. But in confining my remarks, as I still wish they should be understood, chiefly to persons of the middle class in Great Britain, one half of whom, supposing society to be divided only into three parts, are connected more or less with business, and subject to all the variety of circumstance which that association entails; I confess I do not see how the mere acquirement of learning, as generally taught in schools, is an indispensable requisite. Indeed, I should have supposed that the use of the faculty of observation in common things, the exercise of ingenuity, and the gradual introduction to the understanding of botany, chemistry, mechanism, and natural history in general, with an habitual readiness in the use of resources, and the application of means to ends, would have been a kind of training, especially if connected with half the amount of school-learning usually bargained for, quite as likely to make

clever merchants, and men of business, as well as clever mistresses of families, as that system of education which confines all learning to what may be stored in the memory, and acquired from books.

In the use of a mind, it is very evident that those who teach in schools can have little opportunity for conveying instruction. Their sphere of observation is necessarily limited; each day presents objects little differing from the last; and all those unexpected and novel events which excite interest and enquiry in a private family, it is the aim of school-discipline to prevent, lest the attention of the pupils should be diverted, and lessons consequently hindered by interruption.

The use of a mind, however, is just that important part of education which a mother is so circumstanced as to be the one only being to teach with facility and success. There are few fathers who have it in their power to do more than advise and direct in the education of their children; but the mother has a twofold advantage in her presence in the midst of her family, and in the natural influence she exercises over the minds of her children. Oh! but the mothers of England are too busy in the present day. There is really so much to be done for the public good, so many subscriptions to

be raised, so many charities to be attended to, so many public meetings, committees, and societies of every description to be kept up, that in large towns especially, the mother has literally no time—absolutely none, to attend to the instruction of her own children.

Perhaps it never enters into the minds of these excellent ladies, that a little more private good done to the individuals immediately under their care, would prevent a great deal of their public charity being required—that a little more training of children to meet their circumstances whatever they may be, to act with consideration to others, to contrive, to economize, to manage, and to be contented and cheerful in their appointed lot, would prevent much of the extravagance, helplessness, and misery which exist in the world.

I appeal to those who have had much to do with the poor and the destitute, and I ask, whether the most trying cases which have come under their notice, have not generally arisen from the sufferings of the well-meaning, and the helpless? This portion of the community seem doomed to be trampled upon by the designing and the wicked; and though far from wishing to keep back the smallest mite that may be passing into public channels for their good, yet I feel assured we should do more for

their ultimate benefit, by teaching to children, and through them, as they grow up, to servants and dependents, the readiest means of turning all common things to the best account, than by collecting thousands upon thousands for the relief of the distressed.

The nature of the present times, the condition of our country, the frequent downfall of the rich from affluence and ease, and the uncertainty on every hand of greater stability in the interests of trade and commerce, are powerful calls upon the mothers of England, to turn their attention more earnestly to the preparation of individual character for such private and social revolutions, as there appears every reason to anticipate.

It is urged by some women, that they have their evening parties, and their morning calls, to attend to; by others, that they have their domestic arrangements; by a vast number, that they have not health to contend with children; and by still more, that they have not ability. To ask such women why they happened to get married, is an impertinence one is rather tempted to commit; for if attending to morning calls, or even visiting, be the paramount duty of life, a single woman might certainly discharge this duty, with more propriety, and with less hinderance, than a married one. If

the management of a house be urged as more important than the management of an immortal mind, the situation of a housekeeper would have been more suitable than that of a wife or a mother to the woman who offers this excuse. The plea of want of ability is a strong condemnation to her who did not find this out in time; and that of want of health, though, unlike the others, deserving tenderness and sympathy, affords no reason for entire exemption except in extreme cases; because a mother's influence, if once established, is often known to operate beneficially, even when she herself is confined to a couch of sickness.

There is in reality scarcely anything which ought to stand in the way of a mother's constant and strict attention to the training of her children; because she is in reality *the* person whose influence over them is the most powerful; and whatever school she may select for them, whatever teachers she may choose, she is *the* person in whose hands their mental and spiritual welfare is placed.

Since then there is no escape from this imperative duty, let us ask what are the particular advantages and facilities for discharging it, which the mother enjoys beyond others? In the first place, she begins with the unbounded affection of her children—an affection which sees her beautiful,

and believes her perfect; which questions not the wisdom that flows from her lips, and still less can doubt the truth of what she tells. What other teacher of youth, I would ask, can begin the process of education with these advantages? Instead then of leaving it to others to do, what she is sometimes glad of any plea to escape from, she ought to thank God, and take courage, that her confessedly arduous undertaking has thus been rendered comparatively easy by the dispensations of an all-wise Creator.

If, like the governess, the mother had to begin with strangeness, and perhaps with repulsion, how different would her situation be! She would then have to feel her way, to win by watchfulness and care every inch of ground, and to study infant characteristics, as well as to disguise her own, in order to obtain the slightest influence. But happily for the mother, her children love her as she is. Her kiss could not be more welcome, if her cheek was that of Hebe, nor could the wisdom of a Socrates inspire them with greater respect than they feel for hers. How cruel then to her children, and how negligent of this beautiful provision made by Divine Providence, both for them and for her, is that shrinking from, or that indifference on the part of the mother to a duty which nature so evi-

dently points out as hers; and that willing consigning of her children's early education to those who begin the task, and most frequently pursue it to the end, under circumstances so much less favourable.

But after all, the duty of education is one which cannot be deputed to another in very early life, unless the mother entirely absents herself, or becomes a mere nonentity in the nursery. The process of education is going on every day, because the infant mind is every day receiving impressions, learning to compare, and gradually maturing in every way; and as a child naturally loves its mother best, it will receive from her the deepest and most lasting of those impressions, which are to give a bias to its character, and perhaps eventually determine its destiny for this world and the next. There is then no escape. Neglect may tell upon the character, as well as care; and since the mother must be the one responsible being as regards her child, why not set about in earnest, and with cheerfulness and hope, the task of teaching it, in the first place, how to use its own mind?

Inspired by a laudable desire to be the early, and perhaps the sole instructors of their children, some well-meaning and industrious mothers begin with lettered cards and books, to teach the first rudi-

ments of spelling and reading, before their children are capable of attaching a single right idea to the words they read; and it often happens that those parents who are the most sparing, and the least apt, in the communication of their own ideas, are the most solicitous about their children being taught to read at the earliest possible period of capability. Such parents seem to have overlooked the fact, that there is very little exercise of the mind in simply learning to read; though the demands which are thus made upon attention, patience, and memory, are a little too exorbitant, and certainly such as never can repay either the teacher or the taught, by an amount of success at all proportioned to the labour and the pain of their endeavours.

But why, when the mother has such exquisite materials to work with, as the love and the confidence of her child, with its quick sensibility to enjoyment—why does she not begin to work with these materials, so as to introduce ideas at once to its mind, and then to affix to such ideas their appropriate signs? By teaching the signs of ideas first, we reverse the order of nature, and convert into a task of painful and herculean toil, that which might be rendered by the mother a source of perpetual interest and enjoyment.

The memory, too, may be easily impressed by those who carefully watch the best opportunity of conveying instruction to the young; because whatever we can be made feelingly to comprehend, we distinctly remember; and thus the mother, through the medium of her own sympathies, and the affections of her child, enjoys an advantage over all other preceptors. Whatever also strikes the senses in a forcible manner, makes a vivid impression upon the mind, so as to be long remembered. From this principle the method of teaching as at present pursued in infant schools, derives its power and efficacy; and from the same principle it is, that home-education possesses in many respects so decided a superiority over that of schools.

Let us for a moment imagine the case of a mother and her child, gazing, for the first time in the experience of the latter, upon the phenomena of a thunder-storm. The child feels no alarm as the brilliant flashes of lightning follow each other in quick succession, because it is accustomed to think that safety dwells beside its mother. It therefore watches them with astonishment and delight; and during the intervals, the mother teaches it, that the vivid and sudden light which illuminates both heaven and earth at the same instant, is called a *flash of lightning*.

Now compare this method of instruction with that which is most frequently adopted; and imagine a little child poring over a spelling-book, spreading its rosy hand upon the page, and with contracted brow, and anxious eye, alternately attempting to spell a disconnected mass of words off the book, and then peeping again at the unintelligible and elaborate meaning given to each short word, as if to render it less comprehensible than when it stood alone. Perhaps the word is *flash*, the meaning of which is painfully hammered out, or probably explained by the teacher, where the child is too young to "learn meanings." But what impression is such explanation likely to make in this instance, when the poor little sufferer, with its strained attention, has next to be questioned in *flat*, *flask*, and some dozen other words, each as different from the last in meaning and association as it is possible to be.

It is as little likely that the child in the latter instance should remember the signification and use of the word *flash*, as it is that it should forget it in the former, while associated with that wonderful evening, when it stood protected by its mother's arms, and looked out upon the world all darkness and gloom at one moment, all brilliance and light the next. I say nothing here of the more expan-

sive and complex idea of a thunder-storm being introduced to the mind of the child, because I have supposed it too young for such an extent of intelligence; but the same principle, I am persuaded, would hold good throughout, and save a world of trouble to those who should afterwards undertake the education of children prepared in this manner for being sent to school. Indeed, it is impossible to say to what important, or what trifling matters, all coming under the cognizance of the mother, this principle may not be applied. I knew a little boy, very dull at his letters, yet very quick to make observations upon cause and effect, who, long before he could speak plainly, walked one day beside his mother in perfect silence, looking earnestly at her feet. At last he said, in his broken language, "One foot goes, while tudder foot stops." Here then was an opportunity for the mother to give her boy a lesson of far more value than many pages in a book of spelling, or of reading made easy. She might, and she possibly did, set him to raise his weight from the ground by lifting both feet at once; and at the same time she might explain to him in a manner which he never would forget, the meaning and application of the words *step*, *walk*, *run*, *jump*, with many others,

which he would have been months in learning as a common lesson.

To the observation of the boy upon his mother's feet, that one stopped while the other went on, a nursemaid would in all probability have replied—"To be sure it does: what a silly boy you are!" and here would have been an end of the matter. The general incapacity of servants to convey useful information with regard to common things, makes it sometimes a subject of astonishment, that mothers should so seldom walk out with their children; because it is chiefly in their walks that their attention is struck by new objects, and their curiosity in consequence awakened. Even where the attendance of a governess is substituted for that of a nurse, the case is not always much better; because none but a mother can love a child well enough to be always teaching it. The governess, of course, will have stipulated that when school-hours are over, she shall have nothing more to do in the way of instruction: and even if it be agreed upon, that she shall walk out with the children; who shall assert a right to deprive her of almost the only luxury permitted to a governess—the luxury of her own thoughts? Thus, while the child is asking whether the same butterflies will come

again next spring, she is probably thinking of a letter she has received that morning, telling her that the vessel in which her brother sailed has been lost at sea.

Above all other means of instruction, that of easy and familiar conversation is the most effectual in the general tone it gives to the habits of thinking, observing, and communicating ideas in a family; and who is so capable of using this means as a mother? Who but a mother can love her children well enough to be always ready and willing to convert every incident that may occur in the nursery, or around the household hearth, into a medium for the enlargement of the sphere of thought, the correction of error, or the establishment of truth? It is a subject worthy of being taken into consideration, that childhood, unlike mature age, is possessed with an almost untiring relish for the repetition of the same facts which have afforded interest again and again; and thus a favourite old story is often called for by the listening group, in preference to anything new. We should wonder at this peculiarity in childhood, if we were not accustomed to see in all, even the most minute amongst the laws of nature, a beneficent design, by which preparation is made for a future state of being; and here, in the demand of

the child for a narrative which has often been repeated, we recognize a provision for impressing the plastic nature of its mind and feelings, with facts which shall never be effaced. But who, I would ask again, except a mother, can bear to answer these demands? Who else will relate a story for the hundredth time as freshly as when first it was told? Who else will patiently sit by the bedside of the child, repeating its favourite hymns? Who else will awake in the silent hours of the night, to converse about the unseen Being who protects the world, and keeps watch over the little infant on its couch of rest?

It is a commonly acknowledged fact, that half the fears of grown-up people, and far more than half the fears of children, arise from their ignorance. Well-educated women, or at least such as are popularly called so, are often found in this respect too closely to resemble children; for their ignorance of machinery, of the habits of animals, and of natural philosophy in general, subjects them to innumerable misapprehensions, of which, it is humbling to observe, they are sometimes rather proud than ashamed. With children the case is very different, because it is no fault of theirs that they do not understand what they have never had an opportunity of hearing explained. In their walks with

the nurse-maid, they have probably been severely chidden when they have exhibited symptoms of fear, and told that the cow only ran after naughty boys and girls; or that the roaring steam-engine which terrified them so much, was a very good engine, because it carried people to London to see the pretty sights. Beyond such explanations as these, the intelligence of the nurse too seldom extends. Besides which, we must not fail to observe, that in these and similar instances, the sensation of fear has taken possession of the child before the explanation, such as it is, can take effect; and thus the impression of danger remains to be stronger in its memory than its subsequent impression of the justice of the cow, or the benevolence of the steam-engine.

What I am particularly anxious to urge upon the attention of mothers, is the importance of making just impressions first; and I am persuaded that by the means of easy, and, at the same time, instructive conversation, this may to a great extent be done, so that when the object which would otherwise have been one of terror, does present itself, the child may be prepared to receive it under more favourable impressions than those of fear; and even where, as must necessarily be the case, the object is such as it has never heard of before,

the child who has been in the habit of receiving well-timed and judicious information from its mother, will be preserved from a variety of painful apprehensions, by a general impression that every thing in nature and art has its particular use; and that even the most powerful agents of which it can form a notion, are not put in action by any malignity of their own, but are overruled for some good purpose, and often made conducive to the greatest benefit to man.

The feeling of trust and confidence which such a mode of instruction is calculated to inspire, belongs more to a subsequent chapter than to this. Yet, as our trust in general is intimately connected with our impressions of truth, it is necessary to observe, that it is chiefly upon its confidence in the combined wisdom and sincerity of its mother, that the child depends for security, in spite often of the effect produced by external objects upon its senses; and that it is the character of the mother, taken as a whole, to which it mentally refers when surprised into an apprehension of danger from a cause which it cannot understand. A calm and self-possessed mother, welcoming cheerfully the common incidents of life, has much in her power in the way of preserving her children from needless fears; and if, in addition to this self-possession,

she adds the resources of a well-stored mind, opportunities will never be wanting for teaching them *why* they have no cause to be afraid.

Although a comparison is generally allowed betwixt painting and music, as sources of gratification adapted to a high degree of taste and feeling, yet, in their actual utility, they bear but little relation to each other. An inferior performance on the harp, or the piano, is scarcely in the present day admitted amongst the amusements of the drawing-room. Neither, it may be said, is an inferior performance in the way of drawing.—It is not much to the purpose to surmise what a dismantling of albums there would be, if this were really the case. My business is chiefly to show that there may be great utility in a kind of drawing, which is little calculated to excite the admiration of an evening party; and it would be an unspeakable advantage to all mothers, in conveying lively and correct ideas to the minds of their children, if they were themselves proficients in the art of sketching from nature.

Indeed I am one of those who would be glad to see drawing taught to all, though upon a very different plan from that which seems at present to be most approved. It is not the fault of those who teach, that all children whose parents pay for

drawing lessons, take home a certain number of pieces of polished pasteboard, on which are depicted, perhaps, a gothic arch marked out by the master, a bridge beside which he has planted a tree, a cottage thatched by his hand, or a scarecrow Magdalene with a round tear coming out of each eye. The production of such specimens, however much they may be admired by the near relations of the pupil, are far from being illustrations of what I mean by the art of drawing.

The art of drawing should be understood to mean the art of making just and true delineations of objects as they are; and this might be taught, in the first place, by beginning at once to reduce the simplest objects to the size wanted on the pupil's slate or paper. By commencing at once with the process of reduction, it will ever afterwards be comparatively easy, and not present, as it now does, almost insuperable obstacles to the art of sketching from nature—the only end really worth attaining in learning to draw or paint.

But where, it may be asked, if the pupils spend their time in drawing nothing better than boxes, books, or the outlines of simple figures delineated for them on a giant scale—where will be those wonderful *results* which the fashion of the day demands? The results of such a process would

certainly not consist in what could be brought forward at any time to obtain its reward of praise, they would not in reality consist of anything which could be regarded as property duly paid for at the marketable price. The results to which my ambition for the rising generation points, would consist in habits of observation, clear perceptions of form and outline, so as to have the fac-simile of every well-known object impressed without confusion upon the mind; in quickness of imitation, and facility of touch in delineating all visible objects, so as to represent them truly to others; in a capability on the part of men for giving clear directions to workmen, illustrating such directions by outlines at once correct and bold, as well as in uniting utility with taste; and on the part of women, for copying and designing patterns, marking out with clearness different lines of beauty; but, above all, and here the subject assumes its most important character, for sketching with promptness and precision all specimens in natural history, as well as almost every other branch of juvenile study, so as at once to strike the eye, and impress the memory of youth—to amuse the fancy, and improve the understanding at the same time.

We all know that even the rudest drawing of a rat, a mouse, or a donkey, with accompanying

lively descriptions of some of their peculiar habits, has power to fascinate a group of children on a winter's evening, almost beyond any other resource; and if with greater ease the mother could make these designs at once more spirited, and exactly true to life; if also she could add an illustration of some favourite anecdote, by placing different figures together, or allowing the children to choose how they shall be placed, she would find herself in possession of a means of instruction, almost as refreshing to herself, as delightful and invigorating to the young minds whose education is committed to her care.

Were this a more general amusement in private families, I believe we should much less frequently hear the impatient exclamation—"There! take that, and be quiet." "Now, James and Lucy—quarrelling again!" "John, you naughty boy, let Maria play with your puzzle." "Do tell me what o'clock it is, for I am distracted with your noise." But mothers tell us on every hand, that they do adopt this admirable expedient for getting through a long evening, or a rainy day, by allowing their children to *paint*; and that they find it answer their purpose to admiration. The purpose of keeping the children quiet, and saving trouble to the mother, unquestionably it may answer;

and if the art of drawing be considered, as it too frequently is, a matter of no sort of moment, then the amusement of painting pictures already made, is agreeable and satisfactory enough. If, however, it is considered at all a desirable thing either for men or women, that they should be able to draw with accuracy and ease, no more effectual means of preventing this could possibly be adopted, than that of allowing children to fill up drawings with colour, before they know anything of outline or form. It is allowing the child to jump at once to an obvious result, and at the same time suffering him to be deceived as to the value of his work; because he will learn in a very few years, that such a result is utterly worthless; yet having attained his end, such as it was, he will not then be likely, under such a disappointment, to go back to the means of obtaining a better. He will in reality find out that he has been cheating himself under the sanction of his parents, and thus the moral effect upon his character will be anything but good.

After all, however, I am not sure but that upon the principle of rewards being given in kind, a young designer, after he has tried his best at outline, may not now and then be allowed to paint; but his red houses and green smoke, blue men

and yellow women, should always be treated with a certain degree of disrespect, and by no means should they be allowed the same amount of credit, as if he had accomplished a drawing of his own, however rude and unattractive to the mere observer.

It seems rather hard upon mothers who have never acquired the art of drawing, even in the humblest manner, to urge this point so strongly; and there are probably few who have not, on reading the valuable remarks on this subject contained in "Home Education," felt painfully their own incapacity for carrying out the admirable system there laid down; but if, because this generation is peculiarly defective in one branch of learning, the next must inevitably remain so too, we are indeed in a hopeless condition; and I write at the greater length on this subject, because I believe, that most persons who never draw, are under great misapprehensions as to the talent or faculty required to enable them to do so. Hence they complain that they have no taste, which generally means that they have no inclination, for drawing; and this no doubt arises from their not being convinced of its extensive utility; nor in the case of women, of the boundless resources it will place within their reach, if ever they should have

children to amuse and instruct. Others again complain of their want of talent, which arises from their never having been taught in the right manner; for as all persons can be taught to write, that is, with greater or less facility, so there is no doubt but all persons could be taught to draw simple, distinct, and familiar objects, if they were not, by the process of instruction, pushed on too rapidly to obvious and immediate results. Perfection in the art either of drawing or painting, so as to design with taste, and execute with effect, is a totally different matter—an art belonging unquestionably to the distinguished few, and the practice of which would in most cases be obviously at variance with the duties of a mother.

In conducting the affairs of the nursery, it is of essential importance to understand that the minds of children must always be at work. As it is necessary to the bodily health of an infant that it should always be in motion except when asleep, and as nature has provided for this requirement by a perpetual restlessness, often complained of by those who are unacquainted with its relative advantages; so the mind is perpetually using, in some way or other, the different faculties with which it is endowed; and the part of the mother is to teach it how to use them with the greatest facility, and

to the best effect. The toys provided for children in the present day, are generally of so highly-finished and complete a kind, that after the first emotions of surprise and delight have subsided, they fail to afford any further enjoyment; and as there is nothing more to be done towards completing their construction, there only remains one alternative, that of pulling them in pieces. The rudest machine, or the meanest implement of their own construction, has often the power to please for a much longer time, because it continues to be capable of improvement, and is not in itself of such a character as to be removed beyond their hopes of success. Upon the same principle, all playthings which they can use, are infinitely preferable to such as they can only admire; because the faculty of admiration is one, the culture of which belongs only to riper years. Yet care should be taken even in presenting a boy with a book, a barrow, or any other article which has a distinct use, that he is of an age to turn it to some account, otherwise he will bewilder, disappoint, and irritate himself, with unavailing attempts to use his newly-acquired treasures as he sees them used by others.

In all manual exercises, as well as in all operations of the mind, we cannot keep too constantly

in view the benefit, to themselves and to society, of individuals having what is familiarly called, "their wits about them," or, in other words, being always ready for the occasion, whatever it may be. How much of happiness, as well as of general usefulness, is associated with this habit, it would be impossible to say. Perhaps we can only estimate its real value, when connected in our practical duties, with that dreamy, absorbed, and profitless existence, which tends neither to individual nor social benefit. The prompt, the ready, the active, those who are never at a loss, and especially those who are never lost in self—those who abound in resources, and those who know how to use all common means, who never hesitate longer than is necessary to decide, and then act immediately upon their own decisions; it is such persons, taken as a class—and a happy and enviable class they are—who constitute the most valuable portion of the human family; and, admire as we may, the brilliant though fitful exhibitions of extraordinary talent—reverence as we may, the sibyl silence of genius waiting for inspiration—it is to persons who have early learned to use their own minds at any time, and on any subject, that we fly with our perplexities and difficulties, secure that assistance is most likely to be found with them.

Wherever there are symptoms of dawning genius in a child, or of extraordinary talent of any kind, instead of anticipating too hastily the result of such natural endowments, and urging forward the cultivation of that peculiar faculty which appears to be predominant, the mother ought to watch carefully in order to ascertain whether there may not be a deficiency in some other mental qualification, proportioned to this excess.

If there be real genius, it will be sure to develop itself in due time, under reasonable treatment; and long before the child who possesses extraordinary talent arrives at the proper age for turning such talent to the best account, he will have felt abundant need of clear perceptions, sound judgment, and all which is usually comprehended under the name of common sense. In order to pass with safety along the stream of life, under that lofty sail which genius delights to spread, he will have abundant need of all the ballast which a strictly rational education can supply. If, in addition to this, the character has been formed upon well-grounded religious principles, genius to such a child is capable of being a real blessing; but, on the other hand, we must not forget, that without such accompaniments, it is equally capable of being a real curse. To edu-

cate a child to be a genius, is perhaps the greatest absurdity a parent can commit; but to educate a child to be active, useful, conversant in common things, willing to assist others, and able to adapt itself to circumstances wherever it may be placed, is to furnish it with the means of turning extraordinary talent to the best account.

Both this kind of talent, and genius, may then be safely left to the cultivation of after years. The mother has little to do with them, except to see that they are neither too much stimulated, nor too much repressed; for it is possible that genius may be crushed, and the effect of such treatment would, in all probability, be the same upon the human character, as that of lopping off the leading branch, upon a young tree. Other branches might shoot forth, and all the vigour of healthy vegetation might be displayed, but nothing could restore the beauty of the tree as a whole, in its originally bold and upward growth.

It is scarcely necessary, however, to warn the mother against this mode of treatment. Her own partial admiration of her child, her own ambition pointing to its future course, will be sufficient to protect its genius from a system of depression emanating from her; and the mere fact of her natural feelings being so warmly engaged on this

side of the question, renders it the more necessary to urge upon her attention, that apparently more humble part of maternal duty, which consists in adding to her children's store of ideas, in taking care that the impressions they receive are just and true, and in teaching them how to use, with the greatest facility, the faculties of their own minds.

Did not the habit of looking for immediate and obvious results, withdraw our attention from the good of mankind in general, and confine it too much to little points, in which our self-interest is concerned, we should more constantly bear in mind, that it is not the extent of genius or talent in a few individuals which makes a nation powerful, great, or prosperous; but rather the industrious, rational, and enlightened character of the population at large. It is, in fact, *the people* upon whom depends a nation's wealth, its resources, its stability, and its general influence. In order to raise the character of a people, it is necessary that mothers should form a high estimate of the importance of their own efforts in this great and good work. They will then set about the accomplishment of it with earnestness and hope. And why should they not?—with earnestness, because it is an act of duty fraught with boundless and

incalculable benefit to their fellow-creatures—and with hope, because the beneficent Author of our existence, never, in the order of his providence, appoints a task, without bestowing, in some measure, the means by which it may be performed. Thus the mother who feels painfully that she has but little capability for the mental cultivation of her children, may make up for many deficiencies by a willing mind, and by the use of those advantages which naturally belong to her situation as a parent; and if, possessing the love and the confidence of her children, she can early accustom them to the use of their minds, they will not make the worse citizens of the world, or the less exemplary Christians, for having received their first ideas, and acquired their earliest habits, under the careful training of a humble-minded mother.

CHAP. IV.

ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER.

Elements of character may be said to develop themselves when a child begins for the first time to be actuated by motives distinct from the operation of its senses. Thus, when it has learned to prefer the approbation of its mother, to the gratification of its own appetite, it has exhibited one of those elements of character, which, in all probability, will prove most important in its future life.

That ceaseless activity of body and mind which has already been alluded to, will at this stage of experience become capable of a fixed and definite purpose; and when the ends which the child endeavours to attain are associated with a sense of good and evil, it will have commenced the existence of a moral agent, and as such will demand the assiduous and unremitting attention of its mother.

Important as it is, that maternal love should be so directed as to teach the use of a mind, yet, after all, this part of a mother's duty bears but a small proportion to that of forming the characters of her children. It is true, they would form themselves, or rather circumstances would form them, without any instrumentality of hers: but how? Can it be the part of a Christian mother to leave circumstances alone to decide whether her child shall be happy or miserable for all eternity? No; that part of education which consists in storing the memory, may possibly be committed with propriety to other hands; but as a mother's instruction is properly more moral than intellectual, that far more important part of education which consists in forming the habits of children, and thus laying the foundation of character, must belong to the mother.

A mother's superior advantages in the art of communicating ideas has already been described; and if, in the mere act of imparting knowledge, her qualifications are so admirably adapted to her duties, how much greater must be their value in implanting the first ideas of right and wrong, or rather in the great work of giving impulse and direction to the elements of character, by inspiring a love of the one, and a hatred of the other!— By what means could the mother work upon the

mind of her child, so as to impart these ideas, except by that close sympathy which exists between them, by the confidence she has inspired, and the love upon which it implicitly depends? It is simply by the use of these means, that she is able to direct the love of her child to anything which she herself regards as lovely, and to render odious in its eyes whatever she despises or dislikes. Here then is power—the greatest which one human being can possibly exercise over another—the power to rule its admiration and its disgust, its love and its abhorrence.

It is true, the mother will often have to oppose the appetites and inclinations of childhood, but it is in her own peculiar capability for doing this, and doing it effectually, that we see the superiority of her qualifications to those of all others; for no sooner is the child assured of her sympathy, than it trusts all its wishes to her tenderness to forgive, or to her bounty to supply; no sooner is it convinced of her wisdom, than it evinces a willingness to submit on the ground of her knowing best what is for its good; and no sooner does it feel that her love is entirely disinterested, and wholly free from caprice or change, than it yields, under the satisfactory conviction, that its present sacrifice will be more than made up to it in some better way.

With these unquestionable advantages, then, the mother begins to question which of the elements of character displayed by her child, she can turn to good account. That perpetual restlessness for which the poor little busybody has been so often chidden—let us not dismiss that as a crime, without some examination as to what can be made of it. The idea that children must squander about, and that servants must gather up, prevails almost universally in all families. Thus, when the little lord of the nursery has thrown everything he had to play with in all possible directions, when he has pulled the chairs out of their proper places, upset the stools, and dragged the floorcloth into heaps, he grows fretful and dissatisfied until his nurse supplies him with some other kind of amusement, or probably until she replaces the furniture, in order that he may have the pleasure of throwing all things into confusion again.

But suppose the same child was taught—not as a punishment, but cheerfully and kindly taught—to put everything in its proper place again, as a means of restoring order, and thus pleasing mamma, and making everybody comfortable; I believe a wholesome and effectual stimulus to activity might be thus supplied, so as to last perhaps for another hour of amusement, at the same

time that a love of order might be inspired, and a still more important desire to be useful and kind. In fact, there are few things more gratifying to children, than a belief that they are useful; and if they are only taught to esteem it a privilege to make other people happy, the mere act of doing so, will become a happiness to them.

While enforcing the rule of implicit obedience, already recommended, the mother will sometimes be glad to take advantage of such helps as may be at hand; and in this respect, the regularity of time —even the stroke of the clock which stands in the hall—may be made of essential service. It is an excellent thing to accustom children to be obedient to time—to do, or to cease to do, certain things at certain hours; because as time never varies, there can be no misunderstanding on this point. Habits of punctuality will be thus induced, and a general impression made upon the mind, that there are certain laws by which events are regulated, over which we cannot possibly exercise the least control.

An education of mere rule, however, would be but a very unsatisfactory one. Amongst the many unlooked-for incidents of human life, there must be room left for the operation of motive, and the reference of choice from a lesser to a greater

good. Thus when children begin to understand and appreciate the reasons why certain rules are broken, it is the part of the mother to allow such deviations as she may consider most conducive to the good of her family, taking care that the rule of obedience to her wishes still remains inviolate.

We will suppose a little group of children learning their morning lessons, to which it is the rule of the house that they shall closely apply until the clock strikes twelve. On one particular morning, however, an aged grandmother arrives about eleven, having walked some distance for the purpose of seeing the children, and having but an hour to stay. Are they then to go on with their lessons until the usual time? Certainly not; because in this case the higher duty of giving pleasure, and showing kindness and respect to an aged relative, supersedes the duty of maintaining a rule. And thus it is, as children advance in years, the mother has to be perpetually choosing for them, not only the good in preference to the evil, but also the greater good in preference to the less.

Amongst the first convictions impressed upon the mind of a child, should be one of its own helplessness, as well as its own ignorance. The pleasure

of being useful is sometimes turned to bad account under the management of nurses, who go the length of persuading children that they cannot put the nursery in order without them, nor lift the toys upon the table without their help, thus inspiring premature, as well as false ideas, of their own importance, than which nothing can be more undesirable. On the other hand, however, an equal degree of care must be exercised, that children are neither blamed, nor unnecessarily put down and humbled, either because of their ignorance or their helplessness. Since it is no greater fault of their's that they are helpless, than that they are little, they should only be made sensible of this fact so far as to render them willing to receive instruction and assistance, as something which is necessary to their safety and well-being. In the same way they should be made to understand, that since as little children they enjoy many pleasures in which older persons could not with propriety participate; so there are certain things—particular kinds of food, for instance—which they see every day partaken of by others, but which, on account of their being little children, are not suitable for them.

I am aware that in this instance, my opinions differ from those of many generous and kind-

hearted mothers, who declare that they could not allow anything at their tables, of which their children might not partake. But my idea is, that we should begin early with children the kind of discipline which they will inevitably find themselves subjected to in after life; and as they will often during illness have to abstain from certain kinds of food; often—nay, almost at every meal, have to set a limit to their indulgence of natural appetite; and often, in the great duty of adapting themselves to circumstances, have, in all probability, to see their own tables supplied very differently from those of their wealthier neighbours; I would begin early with the course of training most likely to render such crosses of inclination so habitual as scarcely to be felt; nor can I see that there is more injustice in denying a great variety of food to a child because it is little, than because it is ill.

To learn our true position in life, and to be satisfied with it, whether in childhood or old age, is one of the most important of human attainments; and if a mere child is allowed to consider itself upon the same general footing as a man or woman of thirty, it will either have to endure being undeceived by some painful and humiliating

process, or else it will continue committing acts of egregious folly for the remainder of its life.

Whenever children exhibit that kind of arrogance and self-sufficiency, which can only exist in connection with extreme ignorance, it is best to let them try some of the mighty feats of which they boast, and, without exulting in their disappointment, simply leave them to the consequences of their own presumption.

But in order to bring all children to a right sense of their real capabilities, as well as their true position, they should often be thrown upon their own resources. By having amusement too constantly supplied, they seldom learn to know what it is they really want; and thus will sometimes grow fretful in the midst of a world of toys, just as they become feverish and ill, in consequence of being fed so often, that they have no time to be hungry. One of the most striking characteristics exhibited by children, is the alacrity with which some will seek and provide their own resources; and if their mother wishes that they should grow up industrious, useful, and happy, she will afford them every encouragement in doing this. She will consequently allow them materials for creating their own amusement, rather than finished toys;

and whenever they have kept steadily to one object, so as to accomplish a design, however simple, rude, or worthless as a whole, maternal love should seize the opportunity for bestowing a large amount of approbation upon the effort.

Much also may be done by a mother in the way of stimulating a laudable ambition in her children to accomplish certain ends; but she must be especially careful not to go too far, or to encourage their attempting what is impossible to them. It is unspeakably distressing to hear hasty and inconsiderate parents sometimes insisting upon what is impracticable, and going on to declare that their children must and shall do certain things; without taking the trouble to ascertain whether there may not be some insurmountable obstacle in the way. Indeed, notwithstanding all the boasted tenderness called into exercise on behalf of children, there is also a vast amount of cruelty practised upon them, purely from want of thought. And then the absurdities which are proposed to them as reasons for submission! I remember to have been told, night after night, that I must eat all my apple-pie, a thing to which I had a particular aversion, because there were so many poor children who would be glad to have it. Now, how these poor children should be benefited

by my eating what they liked, and I did not, I never could make out; as little could I imagine how it should be a merit in me to eat up all, when they would have been so glad to have a part. She was a good, kind nurse, however, who used to tell me this, and maintained the highest character as a servant. The question is not with such, but whether there may not be mothers who err almost as strangely in their moral training.

Dr. Johnson has told us, that pity is not a natural feeling—that it must be taught to children before they can exercise its soothing power. And certainly it has often appeared to me one of the least attractive features of infancy, that children should evince a mischievous desire for getting one another into scrapes. Not that they delight in seeing the punishment they have brought upon their playmates actually inflicted: the spectacle of suffering appears to shock them, in its absolute reality. But still they run and tell, when there is no occasion to do so, that such an one—perhaps their favourite companion—has been committing an act of delinquency, the disclosure of which they know will bring disgrace and suffering upon the offender.

In the same way, we often see children tormenting animals, even the very pets they consider as

their own, and appear at other times to love; not certainly in ignorance that there is torment in what they are doing, but purely, as it would seem, from an inclination to give pain. I am the more disposed to think there is this element in the human character, because I know individuals, kind and benevolent in the general tone of their feelings, who, from never having been taught to pity the sufferings of the animal creation, inflict the most wanton cruelty simply as an amusement.

It becomes then an important part of a mother's duty, to teach her children, the loveliness, as well as the utility, of pity; for without pity, there would be little done in the world towards relieving individual distress. Pity is the forerunner of help; and whoever cannot pity, is without the mainspring of all human kindness.

I have sometimes thought that by being allowed the care of tame animals, children might be taught to feel both pity, and sympathy for this portion of the creation. But then there are so very few animals capable of being made so happy in confinement, as they would be in their natural state, that there appears considerable danger, lest we should by this means be guilty of inflicting misery, for the sake of seeing it pitied. There are some, however, such as dogs, rabbits, guinea-pigs,

and some kinds of birds, which, if not confined too closely, and carefully supplied with their favourite food, exhibit every symptom of cheerfulness, and even satisfaction in their lot. Amongst these, there will unavoidably be deaths, and disasters of various kinds, calculated to call forth feelings of pity; and the boy, who in early childhood has really loved his own dog, will be likely to show kindness to all others, for the sake of that long-remembered favourite.

Many important facts in natural history may also, by the same means, be impressed upon the minds of children, so as never to be forgotten in after life; especially that important fact, that in connection with animal life in a healthy state, there is always, to a certain extent, a capability both of enjoyment and suffering. The child learns too, in the same way, its first moral lesson—that by the exercise of kindness, the creatures dependent upon its care are made happy; while by neglect or unkindness they are as certainly made miserable.

I cannot then believe, but that it might be a help to mothers in the moral training of their children, to allow them the care of animals; because without drawing into the scheme of education these lower creatures, it is impossible that a child should stand in the position of a responsible being as regards the welfare of others. If, how-

ever, the mother should so far lose sight of the end she ought to have in view, as to permit her child merely to caress its favourites, instead of providing for their support, and making them comfortable in every way; if the gardener is to feed the rabbits, and little miss and master are to call them their own; or if the housemaid is to put the aviary in order, while they fondle the birds; then indeed, the dignified sense of being possessors of property had better be done away with altogether, for any good it is likely to effect. Better, a thousand times, to open the cage or the rabbit-house, and let the captives go, than suffer little masters and mistresses to grow up in the belief that they are really kind, when they do nothing towards putting their kind feelings into operation for the good of others. If, too, the mother should be so negligent as to allow creatures thus confined to suffer from neglect, she will, as the instrument of inflicting misery, be little qualified for teaching her children how to pity. The only safe and effectual method of turning this system to good account, is for the mother to inspect, or to depute some one else to watch over the welfare of the animals for their good; while, for the good of her children, she allows them to act as if they were the only responsible agents in the whole matter. All neglect must therefore be chargeable upon

them; while the health, happiness, and general prosperity of the establishment, must be attributed, so far as it can be with justice, to their good management.

It is a remarkable fact, that the most amiable mothers sometimes train up the most unamiable children. This, however, will only be found to be the case, where the mother is either ignorant or inconsiderate. A woman who is merely amiable, and who has never accustomed herself to think of the moral tendency of certain actions, who only desires that her children should be made happy for the time being, without any idea of their future welfare, will punish and deny herself to almost any extent, for the purpose of procuring them a momentary gratification; and then perhaps she will feel hurt at their want of gratitude and esteem towards herself.

This, as well as other strange anomalies in the characters of what are called *amiable women*, have done much to convince me, that sound principle, and common sense, with unquestionably a due proportion of warmheartedness, are in the long-run more conducive to individual, as well as social happiness, than those ungoverned springs of tenderness and love, which burst forth and exhaust themselves, without calculation or restraint.

A merely amiable woman, who has never submitted her feelings to the government of common sense, will reject the idea of its being a duty to make her own comfort and convenience objects of primary consideration amongst her children. She will reject this idea, under the impression that it is too selfish for *her* to act upon. *Her* principle is one of disinterested love, and therefore she never places herself in the way of her children's *gratification*, never requires anything of them towards her own comfort, allows them to eat all their good things without asking her to partake, and to seize every means of gratification which may fall in their way, without the slightest reference to her. That such children will naturally grow up greedy, selfish, and regardless of their mother, it is scarcely necessary to say. Yet what is to be done, where the mother is so amiable, so meek, and so disinterested, that she absolutely cannot consent to make herself an object of consideration?

It would certainly be a very interesting and charming alternative in this difficult case, if, while the sweet mother should purposely shrink into nothing in comparison with her children, the father would draw her merits forth to view, and place her first on every occasion, in the attention and regard of his family. Such a picture of domestic life

might indeed embellish the pages of a novel; but unfortunately the real world in which we live is so constituted that fathers of families have little time for adorning their wives with honours which they blush to wear. Fathers of families in the present day, and the fact cannot be acknowledged without serious regret, are for the most part too deeply engaged in the pursuit of objects widely differing in their nature from those which belong to the moral discipline of home; and therefore it becomes more the duty of mothers, especially those of the middle class of society, to look beyond the things of the moment, to consider the almost double responsibility which devolves upon them, and to inquire earnestly into the probable means of ensuring the future good of their children.

It is not, however, so generally from an excess of humility, that mothers neglect the opportunity, while their children are young, of inspiring them with a grateful regard for the maternal character, as from a mistaken idea, that in the natural relation of a child to its mother, there exists a bond of such inherent power, that circumstances can neither strengthen nor destroy it. They forget that we do not love our relations simply because they are such, and that even the revered name of mother derives its sacred and endearing character

from the associations of early life, rather than from any feeling of mere relationship on the part of the child; though it is a great happiness that in after life, and when these associations have been tender and endearing, the idea of relationship gives stability and warmth to our feelings of affection.

Of all the disappointments which assail the peace of mothers, and unquestionably they are many, I believe those which originate in the mistaken notion here alluded to, are by far the most numerous; and if the wounded feeling which in after years so often takes possession of the maternal breast on finding that all the personal sufferings endured, the sacrifices made, and the care bestowed upon the helplessness of childhood, seem to be forgotten as regards the tender and devoted being from whom originated this constant flow of disinterested love—if such feelings could be obviated by the exercise of a little more calculation as to cause and effect, in the training of childhood, what a different position the mothers of some families might hold! while, in proportion to the satisfaction of their own minds, would be the increase of their moral influence over their children, extending in all probability to the end of life.

I cannot help again observing here, that there

are few things in this world over which one feels more inclined to lament, than the total waste of good feeling—the utter failure of the best motives, from the want of a little knowledge, or a little forethought, as to the surest means of carrying them into effect. That it is peculiarly the lot of woman to wear herself out in this fruitless expenditure, has been said and sung by many a feeling writer, and by none more sweetly than our own lamented poetess—

"Her lot is on you—silent tears to weep,
And patient smiles to wear through suffering's hour,
And sumless riches from affection's deep
To pour on broken reeds—a wasted shower;
And to make idols, and to find them clay,
And to bewail such worship. . . . . ."

But why is it so? For no other reason, than because woman considers it more beautiful to feel than to think. And so perhaps it is. Yet that she should think sufficiently to make her feelings tell upon the welfare of the beings whose happiness she has so much at heart, is the very point, which, in looking upon the world, we long to urge upon women in general, and especially upon mothers.

Amongst the elements of human character most justly valued in society, and especially in the home

circle, are gratitude and generosity. It would seem that the former of these might naturally grow out of the situation of a young child dependent upon others for the supply of every want, and the gratification of every wish. We see, however, that this is far from being the case; for those very children who are the most unsparingly indulged, are generally the most ungrateful. Indeed, how should they be otherwise? Indulgence does not make them happy; and we find, throughout the world, that gratitude is not proportioned to the bestowment of favours, but to the benefit we are sensible of deriving from them. It is well, however, to begin by instilling *ideas* of gratitude, if not actual sensations, whenever a child is the subject of kindness from a friend. Children should never be allowed to forget who gave them any of their toys, who took them to see any gratifying sight, or who procured them the means of extraordinary enjoyment in any other way. Above all, the mother ought not to be so fastidious, so guilty of false delicacy, as to leave herself out of the question in her efforts to inspire gratitude; for without any assumption of merit above mothers in general, or in fact anything bordering upon self-praise, she may distinctly set before her children the innumerable benefits they derive from

maternal care. She may point to the circumstances of orphans destitute of all such benefits; and she may even describe occasionally to the older ones, her own sufferings and privations, in the discharge of her duty to the younger. This, however, should be done without fretfulness, and without murmuring; for to *complain* to children that they are destructive of their mother's peace and comfort, is infinitely worse than to leave them in total ignorance that either the one or the other is capable of being disturbed.

It might seem, on a superficial view of the subject, that gratitude was but a little thing to instil into the minds of children, unqualified as they naturally are, to render it productive of practical results, so as in any measure to repay their benefactors; but here we err, as usual, by looking to immediate consequences, rather than to the future benefit of the rising generation. It is certainly a little thing for a child to bring the first rose it gathers to its mother, because it knows that she is doing something every day, and almost every hour, for its good; but it is not a little thing, that as children grow up to be men and women, they should treasure in their hearts the sweet remembrance of benefits received, that they should still yearn in after years to pay back again some por-

tion of the debt; and above all, having early learned their own relative insignificance and helplessness, and their consequent dependence upon the kindness of parents and friends—it is not a little thing that they should throw all these feelings into a higher channel, and refer them to the Giver of every blessing—the Friend in every hour of need.

With regard to feelings of gratitude, perhaps more than any other which claim the general approbation of mankind, selfishness, pride, and worldly-mindedness too often stand in the way of our seeing their real value. The various imperfections of those of our fellow-creatures from whom we receive benefits, seem also to afford us an excuse for the absence of gratitude towards them; we find too that their kind services are not always such as do us any real good; and thus we go on narrowing the circle of our pleasurable sensations, and hardening our hearts against those genial influences which would make us both happier and better than we are.

By excluding from our minds the feeling of gratitude to our fellow-creatures, it ceases to be habitual; and thus, when we strive to call it forth in our religious exercises, or when contemplating the good providence of God, it is scarcely probable

that a sensation so strange to the accustomed tone of our minds should come at the moment it is wanted. It is true that expressions of gratitude abound in all our exercises of prayer and praise, in all our advice, in all our warnings, and in all the consolations we would offer to the suffering or destitute; but is the feeling there? Alas! how often has the Christian to lament that he cannot throw the full force of his warmest emotions into the language he is uttering—that he cannot, from the depths of his own heart, go along with the inspired Psalmist in those outbursts of gratitude, in which the harmony of heaven seems blended with the poetry of earth!

Still there are seasons in the past experience of all who are capable of feeling, when emotions of gratitude have passed over the soul like a fresh torrent over the parched and arid soil, leaving beauty and fertility in its track. To find in the midst of trouble, that some one, of whose kindness we had never dreamed, has been making interest in our favour; that some friend has been secretly working for our good; that a sister or a brother has been making some sacrifice, to serve us; that a father or a mother has been praying for us when we have gone astray; and when one or all of these discoveries have been made, to throw open our

hearts without suspicion and without reserve before our benefactors, so as to let them see and feel our gratitude—surely this does good alike to "him that gives," as well as to the grateful recipient of such kindness.

It must do good; for there is no sensation approaching so nearly to that which the scheme of man's salvation is calculated to inspire in the breast of the true believer, as that of intense and fervent gratitude; and, blessed be God, there is no sensation so nearly allied to perfect happiness. Here then is benevolence—here is mercy—here is cause for gratitude on earth and praise in heaven! that the very feeling by which the Christian is most closely bound to the service of his Maker, is that which, throughout all human nature, is the most intimately associated with the purest enjoyment.

That real gratitude — that to which the heart surrenders itself without reserve—is the happiest sensation experienced on earth, we have probably all felt at different times, and in a manner adapted to our own habits and associations — some on entering the house of prayer, some on the recovery of a beloved friend from illness, some on returning home, and some on going forth under favourable auspices; while others have found themselves most

overpowered by emotions of gratitude, they scarcely know how, or why. Perhaps in a solitary walk over green fields on a summer's day, they have paused by a rivulet, to gaze upon half-hidden flowers, and to listen to the hum of the wandering bee, until, startled by a softer note, they have looked up, and seen the woodpigeon sitting in the boughs of a tall tree, through which the sunlight glistened. And then, undisturbed by these sweet natural sounds and sights, a solemn stillness has fallen upon their souls; and while a vision of deep thought has made evident the presence of the Supreme, the Infinite, the Allwise, they have felt themselves remembered—cared for—kept as it were in the hollow of his hand; and thus they have poured forth their gratitude in prayer, such as falls again like dew upon the heart from which it springs.

Oh! who would exchange such moments for the wealth of worlds!—or who, if by any effort of love, they could be procured for others, would not begin in early childhood to cultivate a soil which is capable of producing so rich a harvest of pure and invigorating joy?

CHAP. V.

GENEROSITY AND AFFECTION.

On the first view of the subjects which are to occupy this chapter, it would almost seem to be a waste of words to commend them to the reader's notice, so uniformly is the opinion of mankind engaged in their favour. A vast amount of praise, however, is sometimes lavished upon *acts* of generosity, without considering what it is we are actually praising.

Children should never be commended for giving what costs them no sacrifice to part with. Where this rule is not observed, we often see a spurious kind of generosity prevailing in families, the members of which grow up with a mistaken notion, that in the mere act of giving, there is a degree of merit upon which they congratulate themselves, when, in reality, they have only been enjoying the highest of all luxuries.

In order to obviate some of the evils arising out of this mistake, children should early be taught to offer a part of their sweetmeats to each other, but especially to their parents; and what is more, the parents should actually take what is offered—not merely that tiny crumb which the tender mother breaks off, and with disproportioned thanks pretends to eat. This method of commending generosity does a twofold injury; in the first place, by deceiving the child into a belief that it is generous, when it is not; and in the second, by inducing a confidence that it will suffer no loss by the effort it is making. We should be sincere with children in acts, as well as in words. Parents ought therefore not only to take a crumb, but occasionally a good large portion of what is offered them, so as to produce in the minds of their children a conviction, which will be of infinite service to them in after life, that the true value of all generosity consists in the good it imparts to others, not in the credit it procures for ourselves.

It is not difficult to discover when a false system of pretended giving and pretended taking has been practised in a family, by the blank and disappointed look of the little giver, if a portion unexpectedly large is taken from its hand; as

well as by the trembling and hesitation of that hand, and the fearfulness with which it is drawn back, the next time the ceremony of pretended giving has to be performed towards the individual who happened previously to take too much. Never, it may safely be said, were the elements of a truly generous character unfolded and brought to perfection by such a system as this—a system which, so far as it encourages self-deception, and the substitution of mere pretence for what is real, just, and true, is exactly so much worse than absolute greediness.

If children must be greedy, let them by all means run first into the garden, and devour the ripe fruit before any one else has discovered that it is ripe; but do not let them come in to offer a small portion of it to mamma, in order to obtain her praises, though all the while feeling perfectly secure against any diminution of their own selfish enjoyment.

There is no need, however, that children should be greedy; because it is in the power of almost every mother, to teach them that there is a higher enjoyment than that of merely satisfying their own appetites. Suppose, for instance, it should be the established rule in a family that all first

fruits should be offered to the parents, and that they should be appropriated entirely, but still thankfully, by them;—received simply as their due, but still acknowledged with every token of affection. For those self-devoted and uncalculating mothers, to whom allusion has been made, I am aware it would be difficult to do this, or to maintain any rule by which they would themselves be made first in their children's consideration; but could they once be made witnesses of that higher, purer joy which pervades the soul of a young child on having learned that it is "more blessed to give than to receive," they would surely not deny them the cultivation of so lasting a source of real happiness.

On this subject, especially, those kind and unthinking mothers are apt to fall into an endless train of errors, simply from yielding to a natural impulse to produce immediate results of a gratifying nature. Thus the supply of money to children for the purpose of making presents, for which they obtain all the thanks, and all the credit, is practised to a most injurious extent. I do not mean to say that children should never be allowed to give, until they have money or property of their own; but when they do, it should be in the name

of their parents, and on no account should they take merit to themselves as if they had done a generous act.

It is a sacred duty with all who have to do with the moral improvement of their fellow-creatures, to watch over motives, as well as actions; and as regards the young, to see that they do not grow up deceiving themselves as to what their motives really are. Under no pretence is self-deception more frequently practised, than under that of generosity, as well as general kindness. There may be many selfish motives for doing generous actions, such as reference to our own ultimate benefit in what we do; but the mistake I would especially point out, refers to our immediate motives, or rather to the direct impulse upon which we act. The direct impulse to act kindly, may be a desire to relieve the suffering of others; or it may be only a desire to relieve our own sufferings in the contemplation of distress.

Perhaps I shall make my meaning better understood, by the case of a young lady, who believed herself, and was generally believed, to be exceedingly charitable, and kind; and who sometimes returned home on a Saturday evening after visiting the poor, so impressed with a painful sense of their wants and sufferings, that for one there was

fruit to be gathered, for another gruel made, while to a third or a fourth, honey and jelly had to be sent out that night. Now if we add, that never, on the Monday morning, or early in the week, when servants were more at liberty, could the same young lady remember to supply the necessities of her afflicted friends, it will be clearly understood that her efforts were simply to relieve the pain of her own feelings in witnessing distress, while so soon as this pain had subsided or lost its acuteness, the sufferings of the poor ceased to supply a motive strong enough for the exercise of her generosity. But let us not think too severely of this case, without asking, in how many instances the conduct of the young lady here described, resembles our own.

I am aware that this subject lies open to the cavilings of those most fruitless reasoners, who, after pursuing a round of arguments, congratulate themselves at last, upon having arrived at the senseless conclusion, that all kindness is selfish, because it originates in an impulse to gratify ourselves by relieving distress, or doing good in some other way. Though such a mode of arguing is scarcely worthy of a moment's serious notice, yet as it sometimes catches the attention of those who do not take the trouble to think for themselves, it

may be well to point out a distinction betwixt those kind actions which are really selfish, and those which are not. Those actions, then, may properly be called selfish, which in the mind of the performer have reference only to self; and those may with great justice he called unselfish, which have reference only to others. Thus the performer of kind or generous actions, whose sole inducement is the luxury expected to be derived therefrom—a luxury consisting either in witnessing enjoyment of his own creating, or in receiving the praise or the gratitude of others; such a man, though ostensibly a benefactor to his race, might with some propriety be called selfish; a title which it would be a mockery of language to bestow upon one, who should be so intent upon the relief of suffering, or upon the gratification of others, as never once to have thought of self, or of any other result than what should belong exclusively to the party served. Though the real enjoyment of such a person would be as high, nay, far higher than that of the other, yet their motives being essentially different, it would be worse than folly to place them in the same rank as moral agents; and whenever we would commend or encourage the generosity of the young, we ought to examine well the true state of the case, in

order to ascertain which of these two motives has been in operation.

"If we attempt to teach children," says Miss Edgeworth, "that they can be generous without giving up some of their own pleasures for the sake of other people, we attempt to teach them what is false. If we once make them amends for any sacrifice they have made, we lead them to expect the same remuneration on a future occasion; and then, in fact, they act with a direct view to their own interest, and govern themselves by the calculations of prudence, instead of following the dictates of benevolence. It is true, that if we speak with accuracy, we must admit, that the most benevolent and generous persons act from the hope of receiving pleasure, and their enjoyment is more exquisite than that of the most refined selfishness: in the language of M. de Rochefoucault, we should be therefore forced to acknowledge, that the most benevolent is always the most selfish person. This seeming paradox is answered by observing, that the epithet *selfish* is given to those who prefer pleasures in which other people have no share; we change the meaning of words when we talk of its being selfish to like the pleasures of sympathy and benevolence, because these pleasures cannot be

confined solely to the idea of self. When we say that a person pursues his own interest more by being generous than by being covetous, we take into account the general sum of his agreeable feelings, we do not balance prudentially his loss or gain upon particular occasions. The generous man may himself be convinced, that the sum of his happiness is more increased by the feelings of benevolence, than it could be by the gratification of avarice; but, though his understanding may perceive the demonstration of this moral theorem, though it is the remote principle of his whole conduct, it does not occur to his memory in the form of a prudential aphorism, whenever he is going to do a generous action. It is essential to our ideas of generosity, that no such reasoning should at that moment pass in his mind; we know that the feelings of generosity are associated with a number of enthusiastic ideas; we can sympathize with the virtuous insanity of the man who forgets himself whilst he thinks of others; we do not so readily sympathize with the cold strength of mind of the person, who, deliberately preferring the *greatest possible share of happiness,* is benevolent by rule and measure."

All making of presents with the parent's money, all giving for the mere luxury of the giver, should

then be studiously avoided in the management of children; while, on the other hand, all real kindness, all giving up of selfish gratification purely for the sake of doing good to others, ought to be as studiously encouraged, and rewarded with indubitable marks of approbation.

As one means of preventing young people acquiring a habit of acting from that spurious kind of generosity which has just been described, it is well not to make them too frequent spectators of the sufferings of the poor and destitute, at an age when they are incapable, by their own efforts, of doing anything towards alleviating the distress they see; for while, with some dispositions, there is danger that their feelings should be rendered callous by the frequency of such spectacles; with others, there is equal danger of acquiring a habit of seeking the relief of the suffering, under a pretence of kindness, when the chief or only motive for such kindness is the relief of their own feelings. To accustom children to remember the poor when not present, to lay by for their relief, some portion of the money given for their own use, or to spend a little time now and then in working for their comfort, is a far more likely method of inspiring sentiments of true kindness, than merely to encourage them to be kind or generous at the time when

their feelings are worked upon by the presence of distress.

In making free use of the expressions praise, and blame, I should be sorry to be understood to mean that the approbation, even of a mother, should become the leading motive, in the conduct of a child, beyond that early stage of its existence, when it is incapable of comprehending any other. A mother's approbation, however, may often be made use of as a natural and appropriate reward, and this without any of those direct but disproportioned praises which induce an idea of peculiar merit on the part of a child. Happily for the mother, nature has given her the use of a purer language than that of praise, in which she may hold sweet communion with the soul of her child. It is that of sympathy, which should never be withheld. "It is safer," says Miss Hamilton, "to sympathize with children than to praise them;" and a mother, above all other beings, has perpetually at her command, those innumerable links in the great chain of sympathy, which consist of peculiar tones of voice, caresses, looks, and familiar expressions, down to the minutest touch which thrills along the chords of feeling, and produces an answering echo, true to nature's sweetest music, from the tender and unsophisticated spirit of the child.

We should be careful, too, in the use of maternal approbation, lest children, who have built too much upon this as their reward, should grow up with an inordinate thirst for approbation in general; for though we justly grieve over the situation of a being so isolated and shut out from kindly sympathies, as not to regard the praise or blame of others; yet it is but too evident, from the observation of every day, that no human beings are so often exposed to disappointment, and none in reality so weak, as those who derive their highest satisfaction from the approbation of their fellow-creatures.

Still, in connection with a mother's influence, and with the natural means which are placed within her power for exercising that influence in the management of her children, it must be allowed that praise and blame are legitimate instruments capable of being used with the most beneficial effect by a judicious woman. For, after all, a system of praise and blame seems to be that which is most adapted to our weakness; in consideration to which, we have been taught by the word of God, to look for consolation and support, less as moral agents to the intrinsic excellence of the Divine law as promulgated in the Scriptures, than simply as little children, to the approbation of our Father who is in heaven.

In confining our ideas of generosity, as is too frequently the case, to the mere act of giving, we take but a very low and partial view of the subject as it affects individual conduct, and as it affects the interests of society in general. We are often made to feel a want of generosity in the behaviour of our friends, where there is no giving; and in nothing are we more susceptible of this, than in the treatment of our feelings. There are many friends who will give to us abundantly—there may be some who would share with us their last shilling; but there are not many who will pour the balm of affection into wounds we are justly suffering from disappointed vanity; there are not many who will screen us with tenderness from the exposure of our own folly; and there are still fewer who will rob themselves of a little credit, for the sake of giving us our full share, or more. There are not many either, who can always refrain from reproaching penitence, and triumphing over humiliation, from pursuing a victory with exultation, or from dragging to light the secret sins of a rival. Yet all this belongs to the exercise of true generosity, and is often more touching to the heart a thousand times, than to be the recipient of unnumbered benefits.

To attempt to give any particular direction for

the cultivation of this kind of generosity, would be to presume a little beyond the sphere of education because it must depend so entirely upon the characters of those who have the training of children, and upon the spirit which is cherished around the domestic hearth. One rule, however, may be safely laid down, and that is, never to use taunting or reproachful expressions to children for offences committed, after such atonement as lies within their power has been made—never to wound beyond what is absolutely necessary for correction, nor to allow the guilty to be put down and degraded more than is essential to their future good. To this may be added, a strict embargo laid upon the exchange of all low thoughts or vulgar sentiments, in the nursery; such as personal remarks upon other people's children, made to please the mother by bringing them into disadvantageous comparison with her own; observations upon dress, and manners, furniture, carriages, and equipments, calculated to inspire in the minds of children false ideas of the value of wealth, and consequently a false estimate of individual character. All these, though they may on the first view of the subject seem to have little to do with generosity, are parts of a whole—elements of that domestic atmosphere which childhood cannot

breathe without more or less expansion of soul; and it is scarcely necessary to say, that the low style of thought and conversation here alluded to, is one of the last ingredients we should look for in the formation of a truly generous character.

In connection with this subject, we must not forget to observe, that there is a grudging way of doing kindnesses, even to children, which must have an injurious effect as regards generosity of feeling. Some parents, too, will not make them any just allowance of money, even when they are of an age to understand its value, but on every application for necessary expenses, will grumble as much as if they were actually robbed; while others, or most probably the same individuals, will, in making presents to their children, dwell so much upon the cost, the trouble, and the inconvenience incurred, as to throw over the receivers of such gifts an air of meanness, for being willing to accept, as a means of selfish gratification, what has been purchased so dearly by another.

Whatever is given, then, should be given freely, in order that it may be freely received; for as regards the moral training of children, it is better a thousand times to let them see and feel the difference betwixt grudging and generosity, than to mix up the two ideas in their minds, by accus-

toming them to be the subjects of generous actions performed in a grudging spirit.

It is a safe plan, too, for parents never to make any direct reference to desert, in conferring gifts or benefits upon their children; because, independently of real merit being so difficult to decide upon, owing to the immense variety of circumstance and disposition which has to be taken into account, it is a false foundation for any human being to build upon, beyond stipulated remuneration for actual service done. It is justice, if we knew how to exercise it, which bears immediately upon real merit; while generosity refers rather to what we need, than to what we are. If I might be allowed such an illustration of the subject, I should say, that by justice we all, as transgressors, stand condemned in the sight of God; while by generosity we are made partakers of the hope of salvation. And shall we not seek to exercise towards each other, and to inculcate into the minds whose training is committed to our care, a principle of action so peculiarly adapted to our situation, both as regards this life, and the life which is to come? To be acquitted of all blame, is much; but to be forgiven where there *is* blame, is infinitely more, to creatures frail, erring, and dependent such as we are. This is the benefit we

derive from the exercise of generosity; and which of us in our earthly relations, even the tenderest and closest which it is possible to form, does not feel that forgiveness is all we dare to ask? while, in relation to our Heavenly Father, it is infinitely more than we deserve!

True generosity of feeling is the noblest characteristic by which any human being can be distinguished. We all acknowledge this, but do we all cherish the feeling by every means within our power? If, as regards ourselves, we feel acquitted of all mean, selfish, or sinister motives in what we say or do, let us be the more careful, that nothing in our conversation or conduct shall be found to damp the free spirit of generosity in the young characters around us. Let us endeavour to rise above those little envyings, and jealousies, which so often beset with thorns the path of woman; and when tempted to imbitter our kind services by a grudging or reproachful manner, let us remember that beautiful description of the Supreme Dispenser of all benefits, where he is spoken of as "Him, *who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.*"

As generosity then has no direct reference to the merit of the object upon which it is bestowed, so neither has the affection of a parent, or indeed

any true affection; for though it is impossible to love what is repulsive to us, and consequently opposed alike to nature and to reason that the good should attach themselves to the bad; yet that our affections are but little proportioned to the merit of the objects upon whom they are fixed, the evidence of every day sufficiently proves. And happy indeed is it for some of us, that we can be loved even as we are. Happy is it, especially, for the plain, the dull, the froward child, that, as one of the most unfortunate of mothers has beautifully said—"the loved are lovely." Happy is it, indeed, that a provision has been made in the parent's affection, against all personal defects; so that the very fact of being less attractive to others, sometimes seems to endear the little uncomplaining subject of neglect, so as to bring it home with a welcome of tenfold tenderness, whenever it seeks the shelter of the maternal bosom.

There is not, in fact, amongst the deep mysteries of our being, one circumstance more illustratrative of Divine goodness than this—that the mother, whose quick eye is ever open to perceive the beauty of her child, whose vanity is ever ready to hail the applause it may meet with from others, and whose ambition is ever building the most exalted schemes upon its future course, should see

that beauty wanting, and yet feel no repulse; should watch for that applause, but find it not; and instead of the proud hopes so fondly cherished, should behold a low, obscure, and humble path marked out for the beloved one—that the mother should be able to bear all this, and yet experience an increase rather than a diminution of her tenderness, might indeed supply us with convincing proof, had such been needed, that the humblest and most insignificant being in the universe is provided for by a merciful and gracious Father, as kindly as the most exalted.

The mother must not forget, however, that even in the outpouring of her own affection, there may be something which operates against that of her children's affection in return. There may be a want of sympathy, a want of generosity, or a want of adaptation to their peculiarities of character, which sets them in some measure apart from intimacy with her, and consequently makes her to some extent a stranger to their feelings. To be separated in this manner from a father, is an evil great enough; but for children not to make a bosom friend of their mother, is a calamity of such magnitude as to demand the most careful examination as regards its cause.

Perhaps the warm gush of the child's affection

has not been met by equal warmth in return. Perhaps the germs of feeling, as they unfolded themselves in infant beauty, have been withered by sarcasm, or blighted by contempt. Perhaps the mother has never thought how important it is, that children should be encouraged to speak freely what they think and feel, in order that their erroneous notions may be corrected. Or, perhaps, the peal of laughter allowed to echo round the social board whenever a mistake has been committed, has closed the expanding heart, and left it in a manner companionless and unknown. Now, it is the mother who ought to stand by her children in all these little instances of individual exposure; and it is the office of affection not only to make reparation where injury has been done, but so to shield from danger and from pain, as to inspire a feeling of trust and safety under the protection of maternal love.

And the father too—how beautiful it is sometimes to see his stronger powers of protection brought into action, to defend the little helpless one from heedlessly inflicted pain! How beautiful it is to see—and happy is it for families where this can be done with safety—the reference of the mother to his authority, as the highest and the best, on all disputed points; with the treasuring up

for him those select and appropriate enjoyments which are most adapted to the situation of a weary man coming home to his well-earned reward—the enjoyment of his own fireside. How pleasant then to tell over the little incidents of the day—little to all the world, but great to them—how happy to watch the expression of the father's face, as he listens sometimes with grave attention, or approves with cordial smiles; while he strokes the head of one, as another climbs his knee, and thus dispenses the familiar tokens of his affection, so that none can feel either slighted or forgotten.

But these are amongst the sunny spots of life, which it is not permitted that either tongue or pen should describe. As the glow of the winter's hearth, all bright and cheering as it is, has an influence more felt than seen; so there is a life-giving warmth to those who form the charmed circle, in these simple but yet touching scenes, of which nothing in after life can destroy the vitality, and still less efface the remembrance. It is from such fountains as these, gushing forth in the secret of domestic life, that those streams of affection are supplied, from which we have to draw, in our intercourse with society, and with the world. There will be much in this intercourse calculated to divert the streams from their true course, to diminish or retard their

healthy flow; but let us ask the Divine blessing upon our efforts to keep the fountain fresh and pure, for without that they can neither give beauty nor fertility to the path of life.

I have sometimes thought that those simple sunny spots of human life I have here alluded to, were like the green knolls in a lovely landscape, left out by the painter as insignificant in comparison with the rocky heights, the falling torrents, and the precipitous ravines; yet chosen by the husbandman, and cultivated with peculiar care, because they alone are capable of yielding the harvest upon which his happiness depends. It is thus with what is great and wonderful in the picture of human life, upon which we sometimes gaze with an ill-directed ambition to tread its dizzy heights, or penetrate its mysterious depths, forgetful of the danger and the weariness inevitably attending such an adventurous career. Nor is it sometimes until experience has taught us, that the heights above are cold and barren, and the depths beset with perils profitless and dreary, that we come back perhaps too late, when the autumn tints are upon the landscape, to seek again for the green knolls, and to wish we had been contented with the freshness, the verdure, and fertility, which might still have smiled around us there.

It is an ungrateful part of the duty of those who write upon the moral tendency of human actions, and who consequently presume to examine motives; to cry beware! when others see no danger, and thus to bring upon themselves the odium of being cynical and gloomy in their general views of human life; when in reality their love of what is estimable in human character is too intense to permit them to rest satisfied under the apprehension of its being obscured by some advancing cloud. More especially is this the case, when childhood with its fresh uncalculating energies becomes the subject of consideration—when we sit down to make cool comments upon its outbursts of ungoverned feeling, and its thrilling voice of joy which echoes upon the weary ear like the summer song of birds, startling the tired spirit into hope that some new spring of gladness has been found, when it is but nature at her joyous revelry, making pastime of common and familiar things, and exulting in the fulness of her own delight.

With this ringing shout of joy, the father of a family is sometimes welcomed home, when, "Let me be first," is the undisguised and general wish; —"Let me be first to meet him at the door," "Let me be first to claim his promised kiss." The father and the mother too partake in their full

measure of the general exultation, and the strife of little arms to meet a parent's fond embrace, sends warmth and gladness to his heart. But—and here lies the ungraciousness of those who cry beware! at such a time—there is sometimes hidden a dark secret in that very language, "Let me be first." Yes, looking on the shaded side of this sweet picture, we behold, not always, certainly, but far too often, strife, envy, and passion, amongst the little anxious group, because they cannot all be first; and we find then that to be distinguished from the many, to enjoy what could not be enjoyed by others, and to obtain the credit of being the most eager and affectionate, has had more than due share in the motives of some, if not of all.

The parents, however, are too tender, too grateful, and too full of joy, to note this down at such a moment; and they forget, or persuade themselves that such a blot upon their pleasant picture has never found a place; until the evil grows, and grows, and then they find, to their surprise, that the brothers and the sisters of their family are not united in their interests, nor so zealous for each other's, as for their own individual good.

The fact is, that while affection arises imperceptibly, and as a natural consequence of their care and kindness, in the hearts of children

towards their parents, it does not, unless cultivated by the parents, arise in the same manner, or with equal certainty, in the heart of one child towards another. It is true they are talked into a kind of nursery affection for what is called "the baby," while it is such; and they may also be taught to say "dear," and speak sweetly to each other—*sometimes*; but the greedy grasp, the scowling brow, the sly pretence to obtain advantage, and the pleasure secretly enjoyed, too plainly indicate, in some families, that the fruits of true affection need not be looked for there.

Now, in proportion as mothers sincerely desire the future welfare of their children, as they believe that in union there is strength, and in family concord real happiness, surely they will endeavour to turn the springs of early affection into such a channel, as that the fair garden over which they watch with such untiring solicitude, may still be watered, even if the mother's care should be withdrawn.

Beyond a certain period, it is scarcely to be expected that the bond between a parent and a child should be kept unbroken. In the common course of human affairs families are separated, and parents removed by death; but so long as brothers and sisters live, they might, if bound by true affec-

tion, remain to be a blessing and a help to each other; and should their parents be spared to them beyond the usual period of family union, what richer harvest could they reap, what more entire fulfilment of their hopes, what reward more precious for "all their sorrows, all their cares," than to see their children happy in them, and in each other? so living in harmony and love on earth, as to sustain the hope of their again becoming a united family in heaven?

All this, however, and it is not too much for maternal love with the Divine blessing to accomplish, is chiefly to be learned in early life, and at home, where that great lesson should be studiously taught, that individual gratification ought never to be sought in opposition to general good. This is the grand secret of social happiness; and we should begin well, by making it an habitual lesson at home, in order that it may be carried out into all the relations formed in after life.

It is a part of the mother's duty, then, and one to which especial attention should be paid, to see that a spirit of exclusiveness does not find place amongst her children; and this can only be done effectually by inspiring them with comprehensive, generous, and affectionate feelings towards each other, so that no single member of the family shall

esteem any happiness as complete, in which the others do not partake.

Human nature is deeply charged with selfishness. There is no complaint more frequently made than that of selfishness being the ruling motive with mankind in general. But granting this to be true, I believe much of the evil is chargeable upon the carelessness of mothers in the early training of their children; for sure I am, that no one ever yet was made to experience the value of disinterested kindness, who did not find in its exercise, a higher, purer happiness, than in the mere gratification of selfish inclination. If, then, a family of children are so trained by their mother, as to seek their truest enjoyment in making each other happy, they will not be likely, after having tasted this purer satisfaction, ever to descend again to those lower aims which centre all in self as the supreme object of regard.

One great means of promoting this union of interest in a family, is for the mother frequently to point out to her children the manner in which they may oppose, or carry forward, little plans for the general good. The fireside circle should not be considered well-arranged, when only one or two are made comfortable; but when *all* are brought within the influence of light, and warmth, and

social feeling. The winter evening's story should not be told, until *all* the listeners are gathered in. The walk to the pleasant wood should not be taken, when it is not possible for *all* to go. And when such objections are habitually brought forward by the mother, and the absent ones are remembered as being worthy of having a treat put off on their account; when children too are often reminded how incomplete their pleasures must be if enjoyed alone, they naturally imbibe the social feeling of their mother, and in time assimilate so much to the tone of her mind, that they would be both ashamed and grieved to be found wanting in affection towards a sister or a brother.

When illness falls upon one member of a family, we often see the fond mother devoting herself to the duties of the sick-room with unremitting assiduity, while her healthy careless children run off to their accustomed play, more pleased than sorry to have a greater share of liberty than usual, let the cause be what it may. I would not be supposed to mean, in what I am about to say, that such children could with any propriety be converted into nurses; more especially as it often happens that the atmosphere of a sick-room is such as they cannot breathe with safety. But still there are many cases in which the invalid is in a state

to receive occasionally the kind attentions of the younger members of the family; and where this is the case, much may be done to alleviate the trials of indisposition, by making it a favour and a privilege to wait upon the sick or helpless one.

Amongst the many pitiful spectacles we are accustomed to behold, I have often thought that of a lame boy, watching his happier schoolfellows start off in the merry race from the little mound of earth where he has propped his crutches, is one of the most affecting which the aspect of ordinary life presents; and the situation of the sick child is often too much like that of the lame boy; for though the mother stays beside it, all the rest are gone; they are gone with their thoughtless laughter, bounding over the green lawn; and well the little sufferer knows how they are enjoying life, and enjoying it not the less because it is not with them.

It is a common thing with nurses, and with mothers too, to endeavour to console the invalid by telling of the many choice and excellent things prepared to gratify its appetite, of which the others are not permitted to partake; of the ripe fruit which has been sent as a present for it, and it alone; or of the treat which is in store for the first

day of convalescence, by which it will be distinguished as an object of envy to the rest. All this is practiced again and again in the nursery and the sick-room; and then, as the child grows better, it is found fault with for being selfish and greedy, as if selfishness was not a natural and necessary consequence of such a mode of treatment.

How much better would it be, to make the season of sickness a time for drawing the bonds of family affection closer, for directing every thought and every expression of kindness with twofold tenderness to the alleviation of suffering—and if not of bodily suffering, to that of the mind, so as to convince the invalid that illness is scarcely an affliction when it is the means of calling forth so vast an amount of sympathy and love. Nor indeed is bodily illness an affliction at all to be compared to those visitations of a darkened spirit, which convey the impression that we are not cared for by those we love, that we are not essential to their happiness, and that life to them would be as full of interest and enjoyment, if we were sleeping in the grave. With the watchful eye of a mother ever near, the kind voices of gentle sisters speaking softly by the bed of pain, the sweet flowers gathered by a brother's hand and brought up fresh with dew, the fond inquiries of an anxious father arriv-

ing earlier than his wont — with all those sweet appliances and means which are prompted by affection in a united and considerate family, illness, instead of being a season of desolateness and distress to a young sufferer, may often be converted into one of real enjoyment, just in proportion as it is made the means of renewing confidence, by calling forth convincing proofs of untiring tenderness and love. Instead, then, of feeling withered up into a concentration of self, the heart, under such circumstances, expands and warms into new life; and while gratitude weeps many a tear of weakness and humility, imagination, busy with the future, paints in glowing colours the rich return it may, perhaps, be possible to make for all the goodness and the benefit received.

We see clearly, then, that whether in health or in sickness, in joy or in sorrow, it is the mother's sacred duty to guard against any weakening of the bonds of family affection—to see that the fountain of love is kept fresh, and pure, and perpetually flowing. All those calculations which are to master its strong currents, have to come in after life; all those clear boundary lines, by which its floods are staid, have to be marked out on some future day. The first thing to be done is to keep the

fountain unsealed, and to let the life-inspiring waters flow; for without this, the pilgrimage of life will have neither flowers to enliven, verdure to refresh, nor fruits to sustain the traveller on his way.

CHAP. VI.

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL HAPPINESS.

To a healthy child who has been well trained, nothing appears more easy than to be happy; to a child who has been badly trained, whose infant years have been neglected or motherless, nothing appears more difficult. There is often something in the bodily constitution, too, which stands in the way of individual happiness, without our being sensible of any actual disease; and the mother ought to watch carefully every symptom of this nature as indications of growing evil, which may frustrate much of the good she naturally looks forward to in the future experience of her child. She ought especially to observe, if, when the family group are loudest in their mirth, there is one who falls back from the cheerful circle, and who, instead of catching the natural infection of laughter and glee, sits moping alone, with cloudy

brow, and drooping head, as if incapable of partaking in the general feeling. Such a tendency as this, is generally to be attributed to some bodily indisposition, of which perhaps the child is not aware; but it may also arise from a peculiarity of temperament, only to be accounted for upon the principle that there are diseases of mind, as well as body, the seeds of which are inherent in our nature.

If, in order to correct a melancholy tendency discoverable in infancy, the child is harshly treated, punished, scolded, and *compelled to play*, it is needless to foretell the utter ruin of its temper, and probably of its moral character altogether; for never yet was melancholy expelled except by the substitution of cheerfulness; and never yet was a child made cheerful by harshness and compulsion.

While thinking how much a kind and judicious mother can do towards correcting the melancholy temperament of her child, the heart aches for those who have no mother, who, in their moments of sadness and sorrow, are subjected to the ridicule of their companions, and who consequently bear about with them, in their intercourse with others, a wounded spirit smarting at every touch. The premature and excessive suffering of such children when left to the injudicious treatment of their

companions, or to persons who pay little regard to what they experience, generally renders them selfish in their feelings, and in their tempers bitter and revengeful. They are selfish, upon the natural principle of caring for nobody, because they think nobody cares for them; and bitter and revengeful, because, being wrapped up in self, and that self, as they imagine, deeply injured, they are perpetually tempted to pay back, in their treatment of others, some portion of the suffering they endure.

It must be granted, however, that this description applies only to extreme cases; but still there are many degrees of the same evil, to be found existing in the world; and it is well for mothers to consider the extent to which their children are capable of suffering from want of attention rightly exercised, in order that they may form a higher estimate of the real benefits placed within their power to dispense.

It was the custom with many well-intentioned parents, some fifty years ago, to bring up children under a mistaken notion of rooting out evil, before good could be introduced; of breaking the natural will, crossing natural inclination, and subduing pride by constant mortification. Yet, notwithstanding the various modes of discipline adopted

in carrying out this notion, people were just as self-willed, as determined to please themselves, and as proud, as they are now. It has by degrees become evident to persons of common sense, that such violent measures are not adapted to produce the desired effect. Indeed, some of us have gone so far as to believe, that pride is no more likely to be eradicated by constant mortification, than appetite is likely to be destroyed by a scanty supply of food. Inclination, too, whenever it is crossed for the mere sake of punishment, seems to grow and acquire force under the infliction; just as a delicate frame gains strength by the application of a tonic; or, if in a few instances harsh treatment does succeed in breaking what is called the *natural will*, it can only be by destroying the power to will, which is in reality to render the moral character contemptible and weak.

But why should the mother, in her moral training, allow weeds of evil growth to gain the ascendancy, before she has planted flowers? Let her begin by keeping alive the wholesome glow of cheerfulness throughout the domestic atmosphere, and melancholy will not dare to spread her gloomy pall over a scene so radiant with joy, as that which is presented by a happy and well-regulated home.

After all, however, it is possible that we do not value cheerfulness as we ought. We look upon it as an ordinary something, which belongs to common minds—the property of the milk-maid, the housewife, or the husbandman. Yet, granting all this, we must still acknowledge it to be something which kings cannot purchase, though in all probability they often gladly would. And does not the fact of cheerfulness, being generally considered as the reward of labour teach us a pleasant and a useful lesson—that cheerfulness may be procured by industry—by always doing something, and by always having something to do?

It is in this manner chiefly, that the cheerfulness of infancy is maintained. Childhood is full of activity, and rich in resources; and therefore we make a great mistake when we lavish too much of the means of enjoyment upon young children. It is a little later in life that we begin to want the means of being happy; that the pulse of natural joy throbs languidly; and that we seek excitement, to warm us into life and feeling.

Nor is it in childhood alone that we see the benefit of cheerfulness, for with plenty of resources, and a cheerful disposition, persons more advanced in life are placed almost beyond the reach of disappointment. It is the dull, the flat, and the

unoccupied, who hang their happiness upon an evening party, and who are always dependent upon some extraordinary excitement for breaking the monotony of their fruitless lives. "No one," says Miss Hamilton, "under the necessity of earning their daily subsistence, is in any danger of dying either of grief or love." And certainly that constant occupation which promotes cheerfulness, is the surest protection against diseases of the mind, and especially against melancholy.

While seeking the happiness of children, however, we must not be so forgetful of their good, as to pay no regard to the *kind* of happiness which is to be the object of their desires. We must not forget that we are all in a state of progression, and that children especially are only commencing what time will mature. Why then should we seek for them a low kind of happiness, such as the indulgence of appetite, or the mere gratification of the senses in any other way; since no circumstances in after life, no development of character, and no cultivation of those senses, can render such happiness intense in proportion to our improved facilities for obtaining it. Thus a child who has imbibed the idea that eating and drinking constitute the highest enjoyment, stands in the unfortunate position of having nothing more to gain; because no

cultivation of the sense of taste can enlarge to any considerable extent the pleasure it is calculated to afford.

It is not thus with the pleasures of the mind. Ever progressing, ever enlarging the sphere of its enjoyments, human nature is capable of advancing onwards, until it attains an approximation to the Divine; and the higher the range of thought and feeling which it occupies, the purer is the enjoyment of which it participates.

In this intellectual progress, mothers have more to do than most women seem to be aware; because it is peculiarly their province to render the path of learning lovely and attractive, and thus to associate feelings of happiness with the acquisition of ideas, the prosecution of study, and the general improvement of the mental faculties. Mothers are apt to be startled at the idea of educating their children, as if education consisted in nothing but the routine of daily lessons, or as if the extreme of intellectual culture was dependent upon them. Happily, however, their's is a labour of love, rather than of tasks, and it is simply by, and in, this love, that they are called upon to throw the whole weight of their influence, of their powers to charm, to amuse, and fix attention, into the scale of intellectual improvement, so that nothing shall be

wanting on their part to render their children not only willing, but happy, to go on from step to step, until they learn to love intellectual pleasures for their own sake alone.

That a mother may effectually do this by the exercise of good feeling and tact, without being herself fully instructed in every branch of learning and science, is evident from the experience of different families; for we do not want beautiful instances of simple-hearted, unpretending mothers, not highly-gifted by nature in any way, who send their children to school in such a state of mental preparation, as to render it a pleasure to conduct their education to its utmost limits.

"Many ladies," says Miss Edgeworth, "show in general conversation the powers of easy raillery joined to reasoning unencumbered with pedantry. If they would employ their talents in the education of their children, they would probably be as well repaid for their exertions, as they can possibly be by the polite but transient applause of the visiters to whom they usually devote their powers of entertaining. A little praise or blame—a smile from a mother, or a frown—a moment's attention, or a look of cold neglect—have the happy or the fatal power of repressing or of exciting the energy of a child, of directing his understanding to useful

or pernicious purposes. Scarcely a day passes in which children do not make some attempt to reason about the little events which interest them, and upon these occasions a mother who joins in conversation with her children, may instruct them in the art of reasoning without the parade of logical disquisitions."

It is not then extraordinary powers which are wanted for this purpose, but the right exercise of those peculiar talents with which women are naturally endowed, combined with that earnest love on the part of the mother, which enables her to pursue unwearied the instruction of her children in all common things, and to watch every opportunity for blending information with enjoyment.

I would not, however, by any means neglect those auspicious occasions which occur in every family, of throwing off all restraint, and giving free vent to the overflow of affectionate and unbounded joy. The return of some member of the household, the arrival of beloved friends, birth-days and other seasons of festivity, afford ample scope for these outbursts of natural feeling, which ought to be encouraged as a means of keeping up the natural and healthy tone of youthful minds; for as an hour now and then of absolute romping does infinite good to the bodily health, so an hour now and then

of unrestrained and absolute merriment, does equal good to the spirits and characters of children.

In a rude and ill-regulated family, it is to be feared that such seasons would be marked by turbulence and disaster, beyond what could be rendered conducive to much enjoyment, especially on the part of the older members; but I am supposing the case of a well-regulated family, so trained by the mother, and so under the influence of delicate, affectionate, and generous feelings, that their wildest play would not be rude, nor their loudest mirth offensive.

It seems to be one of the peculiarities of English character not to know how to *manage* enjoyment; while our neighbours on the continent, sometimes *manage* it a little too much. Those elaborate or costly presents by which they are so fond of creating a beautiful surprise, those birth-day scenes got up with so much machinery of contrivance, and all those periodical displays of generosity and affection, though admirably adapted to figure in a book, have a little too much *make-believe* about them, to be exactly suited to the reality of English habits. Besides which, there always hangs about an English heart a certain dread of failure, a horror of being committed in an act of folly, and a shrinking from ridicule, which greatly lessen the number

of our enjoyments, and often casts a shadow over the gaiety, which might otherwise be both harmless and refreshing. There is also, it must be confessed, a something desperate and extreme about the English character when strongly excited and destitute of restraint, which seems to render greater restriction necessary in a social point of view, than is required by people of some other countries; yet I cannot but think that much of this, and much that we see and grieve over in the conduct of our country-people abroad, arises from the want of better regulation in private families, of higher aims in the union of taste with feeling; but chiefly from the absence of all care that the happiness of children should be encouraged to the utmost extent which good order will allow, but at the same time blended with a little more nicety as to the choice of means, a little more tact on the part of mothers, sisters, and mistresses of families, a little more taste—in short, a little more of the true poetry of life, so that the general tone of the mind, even in its joyous moments, shall be in strict harmony with good feeling.

Were this the case, I believe we should all live in less fear of youth overleaping the accustomed barrier of good manners, so as to run riot in its excess of merriment; and while by the same means we should learn to suffer less from the dread of

being ridiculous, we should be more generally cheerful, and, upon the whole, more happy than we are.

And to whom are we to look for improving at once the manners and the morals of social life in this most delicate point, but to the mothers of England? Servants and nurses, in whose company so many children are allowed to play without restraint, and in no other; they are not fit for such a task. Fathers are seldom present, and when they are, they want the nicety and the tact to manage the minute affairs of domestic life, and especially those of individual feeling. It is to mothers then, alone, that we can look for the improvement so much needed here; and with all woman's taste and tact, her quickness of feeling, play of fancy, minuteness of observation, and facility of adaptation to circumstances; with all a mother's love in addition to these, she wants only a higher sense of a mother's duty, to convince her that the joyous moments—the holidays of mirth which her children are permitted to enjoy, are those which she, above all other human beings, has the privilege of sharing, and, at the same time, of converting into lasting good.

There is no reason why children should be either selfish or vulgar in their mirth; yet how many do

ve find who can be well behaved in what is called ompany, and yet, when let loose to play, are a lisgrace to their parents; who, perhaps, from never ssociating themselves with their children's merri- nent, but having been accustomed to send them lways into the nursery to play, and into the com- pany of servants to run wild, have imposed upon hem a sort of artificial restraint, which makes hem decent and tolerable only while it lasts, but eaves them, whenever it is withdrawn, perfect nonsters of rudeness, turbulence, and disorder.

It is not difficult to foresee that such children vill grow up with a constant liability to commit hemselves in after life, which, under the most avourable circumstances, will mark their habits vith a want of ease and of true refinement; while, nder unfavourable circumstances, it will not im- robably be the means of leading them into egre- ious folly, gross excess, or fatal error.

I would not willingly be supposed to forget that eligious principle alone is sufficient to preserve ven such persons as are here described, from the xtremes alluded to; but I am also aware, that ven in religious characters, there are sometimes trange anomalies, deviations from true taste, and ven unconscious offences against good feeling, vhich do incalculable harm to the interests of

religion; and I am therefore the more earnest in writing on this subject, that mothers should begin in time by laying the foundation of lovely, good, and happy characters, at once.

We sometimes find amongst truly excellent persons, a painful and unnatural kind of dread of being too cheerful; and where the pleasures of childhood have been wholly neglected, where buoyant spirits have been allowed to run riot without a mother's care, there is unquestionably great danger of the barrier of propriety being broken through in after life by the indulgence of cheerfulness. But how deeply it is to be regretted, that that particular state of mind which is in reality the most truly happy, should be deterred, by fear, from exhibiting itself before the world in its natural character of healthy cheerfulness, and thus give cause for an opinion, too frequently entertained, that religion is a gloomy thing! If by no other reason the pious mother can be convinced of the importance of her influence in this particular sphere of duty, surely it is sufficient, if by sharing with her children in their harmless mirth, and teaching them how to be happy without offence to God or man, she can beautify their characters in after life with more of those graces of mind and manners, which are at once attractive

to the world, and honourable to the cause of religion.

As the first and surest means of promoting individual, as well as social happiness, I would propose the cultivation of a spirit of love. The more we love, the less our thoughts and interests are centered in self; and consequently the less we suffer from all those little personal slights, vexations, and disappointments, which so often im bitter the cup of life. The more we love, also, the more we forgive; *and to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much;* so that nothing is more true, than that love begets love in return. Thus then our energies are drawn out into those kindred charities, which, whether given or received in the true spirit of generous affection, have power to lighten every burden we have to bear, and to sweeten every draught of which we have to drink. The more we love, the more we enjoy the inestimable privilege of being able to ask a blessing upon what we desire, and upon what we do; because we can neither lie down at night, nor rise to the duties of the day, without bearing in our hearts the remembrance of that sweet fellowship, which binds together the whole human race as one family, under the protection of *our Father who is in heaven.*

How little is understood of the real value and right exercise of love, by those morbid miserable beings, who fix their whole hopes of happiness upon one, or two, or many, and think they are loving, while they are only thirsting to be loved — only waiting in anxious and fretful expectation for evidence that they are so; or recoiling from the world with disappointment and spleen on every cause for suspicion that they are not. Such persons generally keep a strict account against society, of what they consider due to themselves, as well as of what they receive. Yet they forget to compare it with another account— with what is due *from* them, and what they actually *give*.

But there is no calculation, and there needs no account, on the part of those whose hearts have been imbued in early childhood with the true spirit of love. To such it becomes as the very breath of life, for without being able to love, they would pine and wither. If in the interchange of kind offices, they occasionally find themselves neglected, what is that to them? In their love they seek only the good and the happiness of others, and that is generally more or less in their power to promote. If the beings by whom they are surrounded, and perhaps even the nearest and the

dearest, are not all they desire, it is the noblest exercise of love to forgive, and the next to endeavour to improve. If also, in the exercise of affection, they meet sometimes with but little or no return, they accept the rebuke as from a Father, who, in chastening those whom he loves, has appointed such means for leading them into closer self-examination, into stricter watchfulness, and more faithful endeavours, in order that no fault indulged, no opportunity neglected, and no faculty unemployed, may stand in the way of rendering the service he has enjoined, as a duty we owe one towards another, more acceptable in his sight.

Such then is the effect of an early and consistent exercise of the spirit of love, extending in the first place to all beneath the paternal roof, and afterwards throughout the varied intercourse we hold with society—a spirit, which, where it is rightly exercised, has no tendency to blind us to the faults of others, or to lead us to undervalue those proofs of affection which are really directed to ourselves; but which creates around us a kind of genial atmosphere, too clear and bright for the weeds which grow around our path to remain undiscovered; yet, at the same time, so pure, healthy, and invigorating, as to stimulate

to eager cultivation of the flowers, secure in the confidence that they will abundantly repay our care.

Nor should we forget, in the contemplation of this subject especially, that beautiful harmony in the order of Providence, by which all that is best adapted to produce good to others, is in reality most conducive to our own happiness. Had we been created only to feel happy in the exercise of those passions which dissever families, and break asunder the bonds of society, how different would have been our situation on earth! But in the benign commandment of the Saviour to his disciples that they should love one another, in making this love even the test of their fellowship with him, we recognize at once a principle, which, above all others, has power to bless and to bind on earth, while it constitutes a passport to the blessedness and the union of heaven.

Next in degree to the exercise of the affections, as a means of promoting individual as well as social happiness, is that of one of the faculties of the human mind, the cultivation of which is too little regarded in the training of youth. I mean the faculty of admiration, which, if properly directed, under the influence of religious feeling, has the effect of raising, by imperceptible degrees, the

moral nature of man in his intellectual, as well as his spiritual enjoyments.

It is too much the tendency of the present day to confine the exercise of admiration to what is of man's invention, elaborate, costly, and artificial—to the arts and manufactures which belong to a high state of civilization, to the patent inventions of the day, to the newest fabrics, or the most expensive ornaments—in short, to all which may be regarded as characteristic of an "age of great cities;" rather than to a development of those principles of harmony and beauty, which pervade the universe at large. I presume not to say that these are not good—good in a certain manner, and to a certain extent; but good as the objects of our highest admiration, they certainly are not, and especially for this reason—because they are material, and only gratify the senses, without leaving any beneficial or indelible impression upon the soul.

The cultivation of a true taste necessarily belongs to this part of our subject, because it rests very much with parents to direct their children's admiration as they choose; and whatever they most admire, becomes naturally the standard of true taste to them. It may fairly be said, then, that the taste of the present day is for everything

material. When young people now turn their attention to intellectual pursuits, it is to collect specimens, not ideas. Imagination in its higher walks is discarded, and even our works of fiction are only valued so far as they present a succession of active scenes, so exaggerated as to produce the effect of startling the senses. All this may be tolerated in the present generation, because we have yet amongst us the remains of a higher order of thought and feeling; but it will tell to a lamentable extent upon the next, when all enthusiasm for poetry and the fine arts will have become extinct. Already it may be said that poetry is banished from our world; and if painting still lingers on the stage of public observation, it is too much regarded as a scene—a show—a pageant of the moment, and no more. It is true that music has burst forth amongst the million, to assert its rights as a natural and almost necessary gratification; but it is to be feared that the machinery by which it is got up, the noise, and the exhibition, have more to do with this means of enjoyment, than the voice and the language which it offers to the music of the soul.

I am aware that I am venturing upon dangerous ground, presuming to oppose a mere straw or a feather, to the great tide of popular feeling, but

when one has the means of speaking to the many, it becomes a sacred duty to say in what we really think mankind are regardless of their happiness and their good.

Now it must be evident to all who think seriously on this subject, that if we fix our ideas of the highest excellence, and consequently our admiration upon what is material, costly, and elaborate, our happiness in this world must depend upon our pecuniary means, for without money there can be no possession of this material excellence. Hence, then, the strife, the turmoil, the dread in which we live, lest adverse circumstances, the change of public fancy, the lowering of markets, or the failure of a bargain, should deprive us of that which is our chief, or only source of enjoyment. It is evident too, that there can be no refreshment to the mind, in the pursuit of this material excellence; because there is nothing in it which brings the thoughts into necessary and direct relation to the Supreme Being; and hence the weariness with which so many thousands pursue their unremitting avocations, not one half of the faculties, with which as immortal beings they are endowed, having found exercise in what constitutes the business of their lives.

For the remedy of this evil, I am not visionary enough to look to any alteration in our political

economy, or to suppose that a new company will start up to, protect the poetry of life; but I still think that much might be done by mothers to instil into the minds of children a higher taste, and at the same time one which would be productive of more lasting happiness. The season in all probability will come, when their children will have to mix with the many in a course of action which scarcely admits of time for the exercise of thought, beyond such mental calculations as are required in carrying on the business of the day; and since the dull routine of necessary occupation in the present times prevents in a great measure those stirring and intense emotions which fix impressions indelibly upon the mind, it becomes a more important duty on the part of mothers, to seek for their children those sources of enjoyment which the natural world affords—those sources of enjoyment of which a reverse of fortune will not be likely to deprive them; which require no strife or contention to obtain; which can be shared with the whole human race, and still enhanced by sharing; and which, while they expand and invigorate the mind, throw it open to clear and indelible impressions of the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of its Creator.

That natural joyousness of childhood, which is

the surest and the happiest medium for receiving impressions, is best cultivated in a country life. Where this cannot be enjoyed altogether, it is the duty of parents to take their children into the country sometimes, and as often as they can; and if such seasons of relaxations be properly employed, the time and money bestowed upon them will not be found wasted.

It is worth some cost, and some effort, to give young people lasting and deep impressions of the beautiful and sublime in nature; nor need this be confined to nature alone; for having imbibed such impressions, they will ever afterwards be able to recognize the same principles in art. Yet how often, instead of roaming over hills, listening to waterfalls, and holding converse with the spirit of nature, are children taken in the summer to fashionable bathing-places, or other scenes of public resort, to wear their best clothes, walk out in tight shoes, and hear their mammas and aunts descant upon the elegance of the Duchess of D—'s equipage! How often is the conversation, during their walks on the public promenades, filled up with what distinguished persons have arrived at the new Hotel; what bonnet was worn by Lady B—; who danced with the young heiress; and to what places, but particularly to what shops, all the world resorts!

And this is called going into the country! If such be going into the country, we may safely say it is taking the town along with us.

Oh, never let such an insult be offered to the trusting heart of youth, as to call that nature, which the "glass of fashion" offers to our view! If young people go to breathe the invigorating sea-breezes, let them, in justice to nature, see the great ocean as it really is, broad, bold, and deep, without the fringe of fashion on its shores. Let them listen to the roaring waves, and run before the sparkling foam, and watch the hollow breakers rise and curl, and dash themselves to rest. Or let them, on still evenings, see the moonlight on the water, her silver pathway over the great deep crossed at intervals by the fisherman's lonely bark, while his rugged form appears for a moment in dark relief, as if contrasting the corporeal with the spiritual. And then let music break the silence—music soft and sweet, and long remembered; for these are pictures graven on the mind; and the sounds then whispered to the soul, are like the language it was born with for the utterance of its secret joys.

Let parents sometimes take their children to the wild hills, where the foot of fashion has never trod. Let them pluck the forest flowers, and weave garlands of the purple heather, and spread their

arms to catch the breeze, and look abroad from the bold height, on, far away—away into the distance, until they see the littleness of intervening things. Let them descend into the valley, go into the cottages of the poor, and talk with the shepherd of the phenomena of winds and clouds. Let them learn of him what observations he has made in his lone watchings amongst the hills. Let them ask of the peasant about seed-time and harvest; let them taste of his household bread; let them listen to the legends of the place, the old wife's story, the history of the fairy-ring, or of the castle where the great lord dwelt in the ancient times. Let them trace the course of the mountain stream from the far heights where it falls into a stony basin drop by drop, down the cataract steps by which it leaps into the plain; and then show them the same stream in the distance, a calm deep river winding its silvery way towards the sea. Nor let them overlook the beautiful and no less wonderful minutiæ of nature—the grasshopper in the rich meadow, the wild bees amongst the broom, or the trout in the sylvan stream. Teach them then to know the song of every warbler in the summer woods; point out to them the old rookery around the chimneys of the farm-house; and all the while describe to them the wonders of the vast realm of nature, with

the habits and instincts of those innumerable tribes, scarcely heard of in our cities; so that they shall feel, and understand, and remember, by the strong impressions produced upon the spot, that there has been at work in all this, some mighty and all-pervading Power, before whom the inventions of man are but as the honey and the comb of the little hive beneath the rays of a noonday sun.

If I were asked to point out the happiest situation on earth, I believe I should say—that in which children enjoy a free life in the country, shared with affectionate brothers and sisters, and watched over by kind and judicious parents. Yet how little pains are taken to procure this happiness for children! How much more intent are persons in general upon obtaining handsome drawing-rooms, and costly dresses—in short, upon keeping up that external appearance, which is a passport to what is called good society. And when the drawing-room is furnished, the dresses purchased, and the appearance unexceptionable, what is it all worth? Not one of the thousand aches of head and heart which the extreme of material excellence must under ordinary circumstances cost.

But I shall be accused of barbarism—of wishing to go back to a state of nature, and to live on forest-fruit, if I write in this strain; for it would

equire volumes to explain the subject fully, in all ts bearings upon human happiness. Suffice it then o say, that it is only the *excess* of admiration estowed upon material excellence, of which I omplain—the habit of admiring *only* what money an procure; and consequently of neglecting those ources of happiness which are offered freely to all, nd the enjoyment of which is associated with ctivity, and cheerfulness—with health, both of ody and mind.

By confining our taste too much to what is at he same time material and artificial, we discard nagination from the sphere of our enjoyments, nd consequently contract and vulgarize our means f gratification. There may be a play of fancy in ne invention of a new pattern—there may be a isplay of elegance in the furnishing of a house—nere may be an agreeable combination of colours n a fashionable costume, and all these are worthy f admiration, in their way; but such objects of dmiration do not expand the feelings and elevate ne soul; they merely develop in a familiar and ractical form, those principles of order, harmony, nd beauty, which ought previously to have been mpressed upon the mind by the more striking henomena of nature. In order properly to enjoy ne works of art, these principles should previously

have been recognized in their more distinct and intelligible characters. In order to be duly appreciated, beauty should some time or other have burst, as it were, upon the eye and the mind of the child at once. It should have been constrained to admire it, and to admire it heartily; for it is important to our happiness that we should be able to admire with warmth, and even with enthusiasm; and pitiable indeed is that being, who, after spending a life in learning what ought to be admired, finds at last that the power is wanting.

With regard to imagination, it is often spoken of as a dangerous faculty, and treated as if given for man's misery, rather than his good; yet surely it must in justice be allowed, that if, in connection with an ill-regulated mind, imagination is capable of rendering sorrow more intense; it is equally capable of enhancing, under more favourable circumstances, all our highest and most refined enjoyments.

Why then should we wish to discard the use of this faculty altogether? The fact is, we cannot discard it. Imagination is ever at work, combining preconceived impressions into new and striking forms; and where no allowance is made for the exercise of this faculty—where it is pent up without any natural or appropriate outlet—it will burst

forth like a smothered flame, and in all probability deface or consume, when it might have illuminated with a welcome and cheering light.

I was once in a dark parlour in the midst of a great city, where a little child, just able to lisp a few words, was busily employed in playing that he gathered up the green of the carpet, which he called parsley, and pretended to lay in handfuls upon a stool, which also boasted some corresponding green. "Don't say so, my dear. It is not parsley;" said the father several times, in serious concern for his little boy's veracity. Alas! poor child! the only notion it had ever formed of anything fresh and green, was of the parsley it had seen garnishing a dish; and this idea, with which its imagination was so busy, was to be utterly extinguished, because it was only an idea, and not a reality. The child, if it wished to amuse itself, would have to begin again with another set of ideas, with the faded worsted, and the little old stool it had played with so often before. It is needless to say, that with the extinction of its notion about the green parsley, its pleasant illusion was gone. It might strike, and pull, and lift, or act the mere animal in any other way, for under such circumstances there was little else to be done; but it might not use again the remembrance of

a sprig of green parsley, so as to beautify with this image the little world in which it was pent up.

The father of this child was a talented and excellent man, himself an enthusiastic admirer of poetry, but he had probably never reflected upon the important place which imagination occupies in the minds of those who enjoy the purest happiness, as well as those to which the greatest influence over others belongs. He was not one, however, who could have failed to observe that the language of the Holy Scriptures is pre-eminent in its display of the exercise of imagination. In all the most impressive sermons too, and in all those appeals to the human heart which produce the strongest conviction and the deepest effect, imagination is the instrument chiefly made use of, although often unconsciously, by the speaker.

Since then we cannot, if we would, destroy this faculty, and since moreover it is capable of elevating, at the same time that it enlarges, the sphere of our enjoyments, we should seek for it an appropriate and healthy exercise, even in the season of early youth. And here it is especially to be observed, that it is to the uninformed, the indolent, and the low-minded, that imagination is the most dangerous in its exercise. When the mind is well stored, as well as well regulated, the habits active

nd industrious, and the taste truly elevated and efined, works of imagination and specimens of rt, as a means of gratification, may be allowed to much greater extent, than when the associations re vulgar, and the fancy consequently likely to be aught by what is least worthy of attention. An ntense and absorbing admiration of what is xcellent in poetry and art, will lead the mind hich is imbued with a deep sense of beauty, over nuch that a coarse or vulgar mind would detect as bjectionable, and which would in reality be so to t. We cannot therefore be too careful how we ntroduce to characters of this stamp, even those orks of imagination which all the world has con- eded the right to be considered as standards f excellence. There are many pleasures for the ow-minded in their own way, and they ought o be content with these, rather than endeavour to ay hold of such as they are neither capable of ppreciating, nor of turning to good account.

It is too common to call that modesty, which is nly vulgar-mindedness; but on the other hand, is the mother's delicate part so to watch over he impressions and associations of her children, s to guard them with the most scrupulous care, herever delicacy of feeling is concerned; because once destroyed, the purity of the mind will in

all probability never be restored. There will be much in their future intercourse with the world to blunt the fine edge of feeling, and therefore it is better a thousand times to go forth into society a little too scrupulous, than too regardless of that nice boundary-line which marks out the limits of true delicacy of feeling.

Next to the study of nature, I believe that of the fine arts has much to do with refining the character, and raising it above those grovelling and vulgar interests which occupy too much of our time and thoughts. I forget what writer uses the expression, but it has been well said, that "the too great keenness of our uncharitable temper may almost always be softened by a taste for the picturesque, as well as the harmonious;" and certain it is, that a mind deeply impressed with a sense of the beautiful, conversant with the principles of taste, and enriched with the treasures of imagination, will be less likely than one whose admiration has never been attracted by subjects of this nature, to occupy itself with the little bickerings and jealousies which arise out of interests of a mere local and transitory nature.

We should take care then, that in the enjoyments of children, there is blended a reference to the principles of true taste; and, as in all things

relating to the training of youth, we ought to act upon the plan of excluding what is objectionable, by filling up the space with what is good; so we ought to begin early to cultivate a just estimate of what is really worthy of admiration. How few persons think of this, who live in great cities, and take their children to see all the passing shows of the day, in preference to those objects of deep and lasting interest from which a true taste might be formed. How many too, on taking their children for the first time to London, fly here and there in pursuit of sights which will be forgotten in a month, and never spare a quiet half hour for Westminster Abbey, or for any of those exhibitions of sculpture and painting, where they may both think and feel—where they may drink from the fountain of beauty, and be still.

I do not mean to say that children at a very early age would derive any benefit from such objects of attraction. It would be a waste of effort to attempt to introduce to their minds any conception of beauty, as an abstract idea. But there is a time when a sense of the beautiful, the harmonious, and the sublime, begins to dawn upon the soul; and the mother, if she has any poetry in her own nature, knows well how to discern the

commencement of this new existence, for I can call it nothing less.

One of the symptoms of this change, is a habit of deep thought. I have thus far spoken of individual happiness chiefly in its character of cheerfulness and joy; but we all know that there is, beyond this, a happiness more profound, and that all deep happiness is still. Children vary much in their capability for this feeling. Some begin at a very early age to creep quietly to the mother's side, and to lead her out into converse upon deep and interesting themes; and it is then, above all other times, that the mother ought to bear upon her heart a sense of that higher, deeper, more absorbing happiness, which is derived from the contemplation of a Supreme Being, in connection with his love for all the families of earth, his care of the helpless, and his merciful designs for the redemption and the eternal salvation of all.

Alas! how often is the idea of a Supreme Being brought first before the minds of children, when they are under chastisement for having done wrong! How many are told then, and then only, that there is an All-seeing eye upon them, detecting their falsehoods, and discovering their secret sins! while those sweet moments of familiar in-

tercourse, when the dew of affection lies fresh upon the soul, and hope springs forth in the bright sunshine of happiness—how often are such moments neglected, or occupied only with mean and trivial things! Yet why, when we are so ready in the management of children, to bring to our aid the terrors of a God of justice—why are we not equally ready to make use of the attractiveness of a God of love?

I am aware that parents whose own minds are under the influence of religious feeling, in the course of their religious instruction, but especially when they explain to their children the scheme of man's redemption through the Saviour's sacrifice of himself, dwell much upon the kindness and the mercy of Him who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to save sinners. But children generally receive many impressions with regard to the Supreme Being, long before they can be made to enter into this view of his character; and it is chiefly as relates to their earliest impressions—to those just views which are to fill and occupy the mind to the exclusion of all others, that I would urge upon mothers the importance of directing their attention to this subject.

I am convinced that nothing need be lost—nay,

rather that much may be gained, by associating feelings of happiness with the first impressions which a child receives of a supreme and superintending Power. I am convinced of this, because there is no faculty of the soul capable of producing enjoyment by its exercise upon the things of time, which is not also capable of enhancing that enjoyment a thousand-fold, by its exercise upon the things of eternity. When we speak of affection, it is something certainly to feel bound to those we love, even for the brief term of our existence upon earth; but it is nothing in comparison with that bond of unbroken and unending union which will hold together the one great family of the redeemed in heaven. When we speak of admiration, it is something to behold the shadowing forth of beauty upon earth, to feel the swelling of the heart in its comprehension of the sublime, or its repose in a deep sense of the harmony of nature; but of what value would be all this "enlargement of existence," if here it was to end? if the barrier of the grave was to put a stop to the spirit in its upward flight, and if death was to hide the beautiful for ever? No; we have learned a happier lesson than this; for we know, and we ought to feel, that as the exercise of love

and admiration afford us the highest enjoyment here, they are, above all other faculties, those which, if rightly exercised, are capable of adding to our felicity when the shadows of time shall be lost in the light of eternity.

CHAP. VII.

MORAL COURAGE AND WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS.

One great defect in the minor morals of society in the present day, appears to me to be a want of moral courage; and as this is chiefly felt under the encroachments of worldly-mindedness, I propose to class the two subjects together, anomalous as they may at first sight appear, in one chapter.

A want of moral courage is most frequently recognized in a fear of acting in, or even of advocating, a good cause, where blame would attach to the individual who should venture to do so. The different parties in religion, politics, and almost everything else, which separate individuals, and oppose each other, in the present times, operate as a constant check upon the exercise of moral courage, because we can with difficulty act or speak without offending one set of prejudices or another.

We must not, however, call that courage which is simply an absence of fear, owing to an absence of knowledge. We sometimes find a thoughtless and inexperienced rider willing to mount the most dangerous horse, and young travellers rushing headlong into peril, without being aware of the risk to which they are exposed. But this arises out of a very different exercise of the mental faculties from what is required—first, to see the danger, then to calculate the probability of escape, and after having decided that the motive is sufficient to justify the risk, to face the peril, whatever it may be. Such is the character of true courage, though it frequently operates habitually, where there is little time for making calculations of this nature.

This particular exercise of courage, however, relates chiefly to personal danger, and even as such is well worthy the attention of mothers in the training of their children; but that to which I would more especially call their attention, relates more to the dread of blame, the annoyance of opposition, or the apprehension of suffering in our worldly interests. And here, as well as in the former case, we must endeavour to arrive at clear views of the subject in all its bearings. We must not always take that for moral courage, which

induces some persons to speak directly to a point considered by others of more delicacy as unapproachable; because this is too often done simply from an absence of feeling, and thus too often obtains a degree of credit of which it is wholly unworthy, as being the result of candour and a love of truth.

Neither must we call that moral courage which leads vulgar-minded and prejudiced persons to speak in a summary way of liking or disliking certain people and things, without any sufficient reason; though this mode of speaking is apt to gain very much upon children, whose passions, affections, and sympathies, are more easily awakened than their reasoning powers. Fond as they are, then, of pronouncing that decisive sentence—"I like," or, "I dislike," they ought to be encouraged to suspend the one, but more especially the other, until they have some idea what are the grounds upon which they pass such decided judgment.

A want of moral courage lies at the root of almost all the falsehoods which are told in early youth. There is in later life sometimes a love of falsehood for its own sake, which belongs to a degree of depravity not properly taken into account in these pages. And there is also, occasionally,

found a strange propensity to tell voluntary and aimless untruths, a case which so nearly borders upon insanity, as to be almost beyond the reach of moral principle. With such a natural phenomenon, there are happily few directors of youth who have anything to do.

The mother's great duty is to endeavour so to fortify the moral character, as that children shall not be afraid to tell the truth—that they shall learn to love truth for its own sake, and to hate a lie. And here it may not be out of place to observe, that, so far as is practicable, we ought, in the training of youth, to search out and make use of all those faculties and propensities of human nature, which are capable of being turned to good account. It has been said by a popular writer of the present day, that "he who cannot hate, cannot love;" and without altogether coinciding with this extreme view of the case, we must allow that those persons who are most cordial in their affections, are generally the warmest in their feelings of indignation and abhorrence, where they believe they see just cause for such feelings. What then is to be done with this propensity to hate, or to abhor? Is it possible that so powerful an impulse should have been given for the sole purpose of being subdued, or rendered utterly extinct? That it should so

often be abused, and directed to the worst purposes, by aiming at individual character, and opposing itself to the kindly charities of life, is no proof of its being incapable of good; because there is no propensity of our nature, not even that of loving, which may not be converted into a means of producing misery rather than happiness—evil rather than good.

Let us think well on this subject, then, and try if we cannot find some wholesome and beneficial exercise for the impetuous warmth of those feelings, which expend themselves in hating what is abhorrent to their nature, as well as in loving what is in harmony with it. Let us ask whether there may not be a righteous indignation—a contempt of what is mean—a hatred of what is bad, which may be lawfully indulged? I confess that to me it appears that there is—that without such feelings, little would be done in the world for the correction of abuse, or the rescue of the oppressed; and I believe if we would examine deeply the motives of some of those noble and magnanimous efforts by which the helpless have been torn from the grasp of cruelty, the weak protected from the aggressions of the strong, the slave set free from bondage, and the doors of the dungeon thrown open, we should find that the active impulse most immediately in

operation, was a well-directed hatred of injustice, oppression, and cruelty of every kind.

Let us begin, then, by endeavouring to make use of this impulse, by directing it against whatever is unkind, unfair, or untrue. Let us, in plain words, teach children to *hate* falsehood; and to hate it not only when spoken, but also when acted. It is a lamentable fact, that many a little child brought up under parental care, with a cordial hatred of falsehood, and as cordial a love of truth, sent early to school to be tried by new tests, and subjected to new temptations, is there, for want of moral courage, literally startled into falsehood, though loathing and hating it all the time. The loud authoritative demand made in the midst of numbers—"Who has done this?" or, "What naughty boy or girl has done that?" has not unfrequently the effect of paralyzing the moral feelings for the instant, so that terror gains the ascendancy, and the poor little culprit endeavours to conceal its transgression by a lie, and perhaps by a second or a third in order to conceal the first.

Nor is it at school alone that occasions occur in which the veracity of youth is sorely tried—indeed more tried than it ever can be in after-life; because when we have once attained the independence of maturer years, it is not possible, under ordinary

circumstances, that any one should have it in their power to place us in a situation so fraught with terror and distress. In mercy, as well as in justice, to children, then, we ought to endeavour to fortify them by moral courage against such trials, in order that when they do occur, the dread of punishment may be lost sight of, in a noble ambition to dare to speak the truth.

I am the more earnest on the subject of moral courage, because I believe too much is done, and that often by excellent persons, to humble, crush, and extinguish natural feeling altogether. Personal humility, we certainly cannot err in promoting to almost any extent; but there are some noble aspirations belonging to our nature, which ought, by all means, to be encouraged; and first amongst these, I would place an ambition directed to the sole object of doing right in the sight of God and man, under the apprehension of no other danger than that of offending against the Divine law by doing wrong.

Without any reference to a future state, or to the will of a Supreme Being, I am not aware by what means moral courage could be inculcated, or blended with the education of a child; but by the help of this reference, a pious mother has always in her power the means of directing the attention

of her child from a lesser to a greater good—from the mere chance of escaping chastisement, to the hope of doing what is most pleasing in the sight of God.

Moral courage consists chiefly in daring to choose at the moment of trial, a great in preference to a little good; even though the former should be remote, and the latter immediately at hand. It consists in disregarding the transient results which must necessarily ensue, for the sake of more widely extended and important consequences. All this, however, is but seldom taken into account at the moment of action; and therefore it is the more necessary that mothers should render the exercise of moral courage on the part of their children familiar, and habitual. And there is one fact connected with this subject, which makes it almost an act of mercy to do so—it is, that the most delicately sensitive characters, those who shrink from the bare apprehension of giving offence, or incurring blame—to whom a harsh word or an angry look from those whom they love and esteem, is almost like a sentence of death—that such characters, though their love of truth may be as great, or perhaps greater, than that of bolder, harder, and less sensitive natures, are far more in danger of being betrayed into falsehood

from the impulse of the moment. Thus, amongst a number of children, governed only by the general laws of school-discipline, those bold unfeeling characters who have little regard for the opinion of others, and who are under no temptation to conceal their faults from a dread of incurring blame, frequently obtain all the credit of being lovers of truth; while the characters above described may in reality love truth as well, or better, yet having been surprised into falsehood, they suffer the twofold punishment of being self-condemned, and at the same time charged, perhaps publicly, and opprobriously, with being *makers* and *lovers of a lie.*

There are many cases in which the exercise of moral courage may be so rewarded by a mother's approbation, as to make an indelible impression upon the mind of a child; and such opportunities should never be lost sight of, because it is chiefly by indirect means that the character can be strengthened to resist the momentary temptations of apparent self-interest.

We will suppose a case in which a charge of delinquency is brought against one member of a family, who is, in this instance, really innocent, but whose general conduct is such as to warrant unfavourable suspicion. Father, mother brothers,

and sisters, are all agreed that he must be the guilty person, with but one exception, and that a little sister, who knows that by taking his part she will bring upon herself the suspicion of being an accomplice in his act. The little girl knows this, and feels it; above all, she feels that to incur the blame of her parents is a cruel alternative, yet she still speaks out, and defends her brother, because she believes that in this instance he is innocent. Her noble defence meets with nothing but reproof. She is put down, censured, and, more than all, suspected; but still she maintains the cause of her brother. A few days perhaps develop the real truth. The boy is innocent, and his sister was all the while right. Is the mother then to pass over, unnoticed, so noble and persevering an effort on the part of her child? Certainly not. Although herself in the wrong, and under the necessity of confessing before her children that she has been so; yet a generous and noble-minded mother will see in an instant what is the course of conduct she ought to pursue, and she will rejoice in such an opportunity of expressing her warmest approval.

Although the telling of direct falsehoods from a want of courage to speak the truth, is the first and most obvious exemplification of what is

meant by an absence of moral courage, there exists throughout all those varied intricacies which belong to the structure of society, a constant occurrence of occasions, in which moral courage may be called into action for the support of integrity against the allurements of artifice, and the temptations of self-interest. In almost all those trials which beset mankind in the respectable walks of life, it is not from actual propensities to vice that they fail to maintain their ground; but from a little, and perhaps an unconscious leaning to self-interest, a little desire to keep well with the world or with a certain party; and all that endless train of *little* motives which mix themselves in with almost everything we say and do.

Now, it is chiefly against these that I would bring into operation the strong power of moral courage, not to uproot or destroy such motives one by one; that would indeed be to dissever the hydra heads of an unconquerable enemy. It would in fact be to destroy the whole fabric of human nature. Instead, therefore, of attempting to uproot these plants of evil growth, I would begin in the early training of children to lay the strong foundation of a solid character, by making moral courage one of the first elements of its being. I would begin with a high standard, by aiming at

what is noble, great, and good; and leaving the littlenesses of artificial life to vanish into nothing; as they necessarily would, by the mind being stored with materials of a weightier and more sterling nature.

But how is this great and important work to be accomplished? First, I should say, by impressing upon the minds of children a just estimate of all moral qualities. It may occasion greater inconvenience to the mother at the moment, that her child should tear a new dress, than that it should tell a falsehood; but if, from any personal feeling, she allows her disapprobation to be expressed as strongly in one case, as in the other; if she evinces as much dissatisfaction at the fall of a china-cup, as at an act of meanness or deception practised by one child towards another; or if her delight is as manifest on the arrival of a new article of furniture, as on some evidence in her family that wrong feeling has been overcome, or noble and generous sentiments called into exercise, she will do incalculable mischief, by destroying what ought to be a clear distinction betwixt the degrees of moral feeling comprehended in these different cases.

It is the same throughout the whole of that discipline to which youth is subjected. We must

keep the balance true, not only as regards actions, but motives, so far as they can be ascertained; and never from personal feeling, or momentary impulse, allow undue weight to be thrown into either scale. Above all, we must maintain a constant reference to what is approved by God, rather than by man—to what is consistent with Christian profession, rather than to what may be expedient, creditable, or consistent with the usages of the world. We ought to teach children, that having done simply what was right, there is nothing, and there can be nothing, to fear; and we should teach this on the broad foundation, that the habits and customs of ten thousand worlds cannot alter one tittle of the Divine law, or make that good which is really evil.

Any one who has paid much attention to the state of society in the present day, will, I think, agree with me, that these are times in which mothers are especially called upon to teach their children, that they are acting not merely with a party for the support of a particular set of opinions, and in opposition to all who hold opinions differing in the slightest degree; but as citizens of a great world, subject with all the families of earth to the same supreme Head, lovers of truth, with the

Bible for their guide, and aspirants to an immortality, in which the language of universal love will exclude all reference to sect or party.

If, in our after-intercourse with society, we must unavoidably attach ourselves to one party or another, in almost everything we do; and if in such association it is almost impossible to keep our feelings unwarped by prejudice, let us at least endeavour to impress strong characters of truth upon the open and unbiassed mind of youth, so that having pre-occupied the sphere of thought and feeling, by those clear facts of pre-eminent importance, respecting which mankind are not able to disagree, there may be less room left for points of minor moment, and especially for those little causes of dispute which call forth so much of the rancour and bitterness of party spirit.

It seems to me that in these important matters, the tendency of the times to obvious and immediate results, operates in an especial manner. It is not now the man who serves his Maker most faithfully, who is most looked up to by his fellow-Christians; but the man who comes forward, and gives largely, who makes speeches, or writes pamphlets, for the support of some particular set of opinions. All these are *results*—they are what can be seen and heard of men—they strike the

attention, rouse into action, and give people something to do. All this kind of excitement, and this advocacy of certain parties and opinions, is particularly agreeable to the young; and could it be conducted without prejudice or animosity, might certainly be advantageous in calling their energies into exercise. But, alas! we forget, in those stirring moments, when the young spirit is fired by a high impulse to be doing something in a great and good cause—we forget the contempt which is at the same time inspired for those who are inactive, the pride which swells the bosom of the young aspirant to be foremost in the field; and, worse than all, the bitterness and the rancour which are called into exercise against those who oppose themselves to his career, or who presume even to call in question either its wisdom or its expediency.

I have sometimes imagined a visitant from another world coming down to this, fully acquainted with the principles of the gospel upon which our religious faith is built, and knowing also that we are professed followers of that Saviour whose test of discipleship was, that we should love one another, and who bequeathed his peace as the greatest blessing he could bestow upon those who should keep his commandments. I have imagined such a being reading our public journals, but

especially some of our professedly religious ones, and I have thought that the first inquiry he would make, would be, whether he had not arrived at the wrong planet? whether, in fact, he had not alighted upon fiery Mars, rather than descended into the bosom of a Christian community?

I am induced to speak of these strange anomalies in public as well as private feeling, not from any wish presumptuously to interfere with a department of human affairs which is far beyond the purpose of my present work; but I speak of these things, because they constitute too much the atmosphere in which we live, and it is my wish— my intreaty— my prayer, that children should be preserved from breathing this atmosphere sooner than is absolutely necessary. By being too early plunged into all the meanness, the littleness, and, may we not say, the sinfulness of party feeling, by seeing their parents and friends worked up to extravagance and animosity, on all those public occasions which offer exalted places to the advocates of their particular party, they lose sight of the value of those principles which *all good* men advocate, and of the supremacy of that party to which *all good* men belong.

Men are in general too deeply engaged themselves in affairs of public interest, to allow of their

exercising any very beneficial influence over their children in this respect; but surely women may so far abstract their thoughts from the mere trappings and pageantry of human life, as to lead the minds of their children along with them, in looking to its realities, and especially to its oneness of interest in the great end of existence. Much may be done in this way by a judicious mother, where subjects of sectarian interest are under discussion, to ward off the attention of the young from the extreme importance attached by persons generally to different forms of government, or modes of worship. Much may also be done by a mother to impress upon the minds of her children, that the religious sect to which their parents belong, is preferred by them, not because it is perfect in itself, or more owned by God as regards the tokens of his especial favour, but because the views and principles upon which it is founded, are most in accordance with their own, and consequently afford them more support and satisfaction than any other. Even where, as is frequently the case, they do devoutly believe that the church to which they belong is the only true church, parents ought in justice to make their children acquainted with the fact, that the members of other churches as devoutly believe the same of theirs.

I know not whether I have made my meaning clear, in describing what I believe to be the only true foundation of a strong moral character; but, in order to render more obvious the value of moral courage in our intercourse with society, I will notice a few instances in which it is brought into opposition to worldly-mindedness, and I fear they must be those in which it seldom gains the mastery.

I have already pointed out the manner in which an absence of moral courage operates against the love of truth; and it is much in the same manner that prejudices are generally imbibed—because people dare not think for themselves—because they dread the responsibility of having formed their own opinions, and feel a kind of safety in thinking as some person, or some party, thinks. If they were to form their own opinions, they would have to defend them when called in question, or to bear a certain degree of odium, when they were contemned; but if they adopt the opinions of certain individuals, more especially if they think as all the world thinks, there is an end at once of argument—they enjoy the satisfaction of feeling themselves victorious, without being required to prove that they are so. Even when convinced of having been wrong, persons who are

deficient in moral courage dare not avow their change of opinion; but go on persuading themselves against conviction, or else invent some subterfuge by which they can escape, without having the candour to make an honourable recantation.

There is an excellent maxim which all mothers ought to impress upon the minds of their children, that "to confess that you have been in the wrong, is only saying in other words, that you are wiser to-day than you were yesterday;" and where the love of truth, simply for its own sake, is the prevailing aim of a family, I cannot think that such candid confessions need be attended with any difficulty. To have discovered a mistake, is no trifling step in the path of wisdom; and when it happens to be our own, we have all the more need to rejoice at having found it out.

In such cases as these, it is chiefly, if not entirely, by moral courage, that we are helped over the little obstacles presented by vanity, obstinacy, and self-esteem. We feel the greater good of seeing and acknowledging the truth; but without moral courage, we shrink from being laughed at, or triumphed over, for not having seen it before. Yet what is all this paltriness of personal feeling, in comparison with the beauty and the majesty of truth? Children, then, should learn not

only to love truth for its own sake, but to dare to uphold it, even at the risk of a banter or a sneer.

But above all other enemies to moral courage, is the world—the world in which we live—that grand master of forms and ceremonies, in whose service, it is our perpetual aim to live as other people live, and to do as other people do, in order that we may not lose caste, and go down in the favour of the world. It is sometimes true that we can ill afford such a style of living—it may be true that we are in debt—and what is more wonderful, it may also be true that we do not ourselves really value the things we are struggling to possess; but the world would forget us—we should not be visited, or, if we were, it would only be to be despised—did we dare to be singular, or regardless of these things.

"What world?" the strange visitant of earth might ask—"What world is that which occupies a place of paramount importance in almost every human heart!" "The world in which we live;" some candid voice might answer. "Nay;" the visitant would reply, "that can never be; for have we not the testimony of all mankind, from the prince down to the lowest peasant, that the world is hated, despised, regarded as a bitter enemy—at once an ingrate, and a tyrant? And certain it is,

there are few human beings who can say in their hearts, that they love, and honour, though they are but too willing to obey, the world to whose bondage they submit. While reading the works of some authors, one would think indeed that the world was a perfect monster, for there is scarcely an opprobrious epithet, or an abusive charge, which has not been thrown out against it by one or another; while none have come forward to defend it, or to prove that it is really worthy of a better name.

For my own part, I have always found it a satisfactory conclusion when judging of the world, that whatever its faults or its abuses may be, it is under the superintending care of One who has the power to overrule its worst elements for good, and who knows, better than I do, what really is good. But when we make to ourselves an idol of the world, when we bow down and worship it, when we sacrifice our best feelings at its shrine, and make its laws the test of all excellence, then indeed, it is time to cry out against the world; because then it is evident, that instead of regarding it as the theatre in which we are to act for a short season of trial, the garden in which we are to labour in the service of our Heavenly Master, the field in which we are to fight as good soldiers of Christ,

we are making it our home—I was about to add, our *rest*; but never yet was rest the portion of those who made the world their home.

An extreme regard for the approval of the world, and an excessive absorption in the interests of this life, is generally called worldly-mindedness; and this it is which meets us in every path, besets the wise as well as the simple, the rich as well as the poor, and, I had almost said, the good as well as the evil. Should I have been altogether wrong, if I had? For is it not lurking in the sanctuary, when we take our places there; waiting for the minister, when he descends from his desk; busy with the congregation, as they disperse? Does it not meet us at our homes on the sabbath-day, close the door of the closet which should be entered for prayer, and finally send us to sleep with bright visions of the anticipated events or occupations of the coming week? Nor on the sabbath alone, but on every other day and night of his existence, I believe that a spirit of worldly-mindedness is that with which the Christian has to contend more frequently than with any other. I do not say that there may not be at times strong passions and dark propensities in his nature, against which he has to wage a more desperate and determined warfare; but the peculiarity of worldly-mindedness,

is that it is always present, and always under the fair colours of respectability, convenience, interest, or expediency, holding up a false standard of excellence for us to aim at.

I do not presume either to say, that moral courage alone will conquer this enemy. I think I have sufficiently explained my meaning, that moral courage, founded upon religious principle—for indeed I cannot well imagine any other—that such is the armour by which young people ought to be defended when they go forth into society, in order that they may not be induced to adopt the false standard which worldly-mindedness will ever be presenting to their view.

In the exercise of our affections, and in all our kindly feelings, worldly-mindedness has the power to contract and harden the heart to a lamentable extent; not that we begin by preferring the claims of the world to those of kindness, but having made this a habit, having made the favour of the world our chief good, we cease, in time, to experience those warm fresh springs of generous impulse, which might so often gladden and beautify the path of life.

Let us imagine the case of a respectable family travelling at a distance from their home and friends, having fallen by some accident into cir-

cumstances of trial and distress; one of their party being dangerously ill, they are detained upon the road, and in a strange land receive the kindness of a family a little beneath themselves in outward circumstances, or, in other words, a little poorer, and less expensive in their general habits. These things, however, are little thought of by the family in trouble, because they feel themselves to be, for the time, out of the world; and under circumstances of trial and distress, they escape for a while from the thraldom of worldly-mindedness. But soon their affairs assume a more favourable aspect, and they return to their own residence, where, without riches, they make rather a showy and elegant appearance, and in short, stand well with their master, the world.

Their first impulse on returning home is to remember the friends in the strange land, whose kindness and hospitality it would indeed be impossible to forget. They are a grateful family too, and one and all have been busy on their journey planning what each could do in the way of sending some little memorial of their gratitude. Arrived at home, however, they find from the state of affairs, and from the extraordinary expenses incident to their late journey, that they are likely to be rather straitened for means during the next few weeks,

and therefore the memorials must wait. Indeed all are agreed, that it will look better to send them after a little time has elapsed. It is not, however, the journey alone which has brought them to this conclusion, but a season of gaiety being just commenced in the town where they live, there is a new satin dress to be bought for the mother, and so on, through all the members of the family, whose age entitles them to the supreme privilege of appearing well dressed in public.

In this state of things, Christmas arrives, with its never-failing demands upon the purses of householders; but still the family feel grateful, and remember, with often-expressed regret, that they have as yet done nothing towards acknowledgment of the kind services of those distant friends. Winter passes, and summer comes; but the family, living for the world, and to the extent of their income, have literally nothing to spare for the claims of gratitude; and by degrees the whole affair is forgotten, or rather thrust out of mind by the crowding in of other and more immediate objects of attention. It is not forgotten, because the family are still grateful, but it has become rather a painful subject, and therefore they never mention it.

A year or two passes in this manner, when one

of the boys returning home from school, declares he has seen the youngest son of the C—— family, and that they have all come to settle in the very town where the obliged family live. Here then is an opportunity at hand of showing how gratefully their kindness is remembered. No doubt they are strangers in the place. No doubt they want friends, for they were evidently rather straitened in their means. No doubt they want the countenance of some respectable and influential person, for the father was even at that time looking out for a situation. Here then is an excellent opportunity for showing what gratitude can do. Let us see how the world permits it to be used.

"Is it possible," exclaims the mother, "they can have come to live in this place?"

"I am sure it is so," replied the boy, "for little Harry told me where they live."

"And where is that?" asks the mother.

"You shall guess," replies the boy, with an arch look, as if he had an extraordinary secret to disclose.

"Perhaps in Brunswick Place?"

"No; actually!" exclaims the boy, "at No. 1, in that row of shabby houses at the back of the tallow-chandler's!"

The mother makes no remark, but the father

and she exchange glances. What they say in private, or how they calculate opposing reasons for and against this family being called upon, the reader can easily imagine. Suffice it, that after a few days have passed over, the following scene takes place in the grateful family.

"Mamma," says one of the daughters, "what do you think cook told Caroline?—that the C—s absolutely live without a servant."

"Nonsense! my dear," replies the mother, "you should not listen to what the cook says."

"But it must be true," exclaims the boy who spoke before. "I am sure it must, for yesterday, as I was going to school, I just looked in at Mr. Blanchard's window, to see if he had any more of those fine French plums, when who should I see standing at the counter, but that very young lady with the large blue eyes, who used to be so kind to Harriet—I mean, who brought her the nice fruit, for they were all kind. So I watched what she was doing, and I saw her take some groceries into a little basket which she held on her arm, and then some butter; but as the butter would not go into her basket, she asked for another paper, and actually took it in her hand, in this manner. She did, indeed! mamma, and I believe some lard too." Upon which intelligence, each of the

younger members of the grateful family makes a face; and there is an end of the whole matter—the C—s are not to be called upon.

Now, it does not at all follow, because this has transpired in a family, that the members of it are pleased with themselves—that they feel at ease, or can look with steadiness and satisfaction down the humble street, and directly at the door which has no servant to open it. No; I maintain that they may still be grateful, but being servants of the world, they can do all this, and feel both mean and miserable while they do it. But I maintain also, that these are especially cases in which moral courage would preserve us from such contemptible—such culpable servitude; for what, to a person fortified by moral courage, would it be, to incur the risk of being called upon by a lady of rank at the very time when one of the C— family was present, in comparison with the certainty of acting meanly and ungratefully to those who both deserved and needed kindness?

As regards benevolence too, as well as gratitude, it is easy to point out a case in which worldly-mindedness asserts its mastery over the actions of a good man, purely from his want of moral

courage. We will imagine a respectable and benevolent individual called upon by the zealous agent of some institution for the public good. The first thing asked for, is the list of the subscribers' names. The benevolent man looks carefully up and down, and then gives his money, but declines adding his name. It happens, perhaps, in this instance, as in many others, that the name of a wealthy and influential person would be of more service to the cause than any small amount of pecuniary aid; and he is consequently urged to add his name to the list, but he still refuses. He is asked whether he does not consider such an institution much needed? "Oh yes,"—Whether he does not believe it to be founded on right principles, and, so far as it has been tried, well conducted? and so on.—"Yes," he approves of it altogether, and expresses his approbation in the warmest terms; but still he will not pledge himself so publicly as to give his name. In the course of a few days, the same individual is called upon again, with the list of subscribers considerably enlarged. The benevolent man glances his eye over the long columns, and this time he discovers the signature of a titled friend, a great landed proprietor in the neighbourhood, and last, but not

least—a minister of religion. It is enough—the benevolent man has now sufficient courage to write his name, and with that he doubles his subscription.

It would not be possible, within moderate limits, to specify the various instances occurring perpetually in social life, where moral courage may properly be opposed to worldly-mindedness; but we must not forget that important one of defending the absent when we hear them unjustly blamed, or a wrong construction put upon their actions. To defend a public character who has a strong party on his side, requires no great amount of courage, even amongst his enemies; but to defend the defenceless, an obscure individual, a poor relation, or an humble friend, those who have nothing distinguished or dignified about them, is a very different matter. If a friend, for instance, has done a glaringly foolish thing, written or taken up a cause which the world holds in derision; to hear that friend ridiculed, and contemned, nay, literally abused, and say nothing, is the part most frequently acted by those who are deficient in moral courage; yet as a proof that the absent friend is really in secret valued, notwithstanding the adverse tide of popular opinion, no sooner is a voice lifted up in his defence, than they are delighted beyond measure;

and especially if it be an influential voice, they place themselves immediately on that side of the question, and declare their opinions to have been favourable all the time.

There is also another important feature frequently displayed by the same moral weakness. It is where families or friends live in the habit of flattering each other, and never venture to speak candidly of each other's faults, except on occasions of anger, or under the influence of passion; when, all apprehension of consequences being lost sight of, there follows an outburst of injurious accusations, the more deeply wounding to the accused, because they convey the impression of having been long treasured up, and even harboured in the breast, at the very time when the most familiar and affectionate confidence appeared to prevail.

The amount of individual and social happiness thus destroyed by the work of a moment, is perhaps greater than by any other means. The confidence broken never again to be restored, the spirit wounded so as never again to be healed, the bond of affection rent asunder never again to be united—these are amongst the trophies of that cruel warfare, by which a reckless and ungoverned temper may scatter ruin over the loveliest gardens of domestic happiness.

It is of the utmost importance then, that children should be taught to speak the truth to each other, not petulantly, and especially not in a taunting or triumphant manner; but tenderly, and kindly—in pity, rather than hate; and, above all, with humility, as esteeming themselves no better for having been able to point out another person's fault.

But there is a far more important class of instances yet to be noticed, and under that class what a dark catalogue is registered! I mean instances in which the most indissoluble of all earthly unions is entered into from motives of worldly-mindedness. That instances of this kind are occurring every day, is a fact too generally acknowledged to need any additional proof; and when we think that worldly-mindedness has thus the power to wrench, as it were, the heart-strings asunder, or to consign its votaries to a kind of living death, as it must before it can separate those who love, or chain together those who hate—when we think that moral courage might rescue the victims of this cruel tyranny, and snatch them from the irremediable wretchedness into which they would otherwise be plunged, surely no effort can be too great, no labour too much, to bestow

upon that improvement in the state of public feeling, which is so much needed here.

Time was when parents and guardians were the parties blamed for making worldly aggrandisement their object in such alliances, rather than the happiness of the parties most immediately concerned; and the romances of the last century abound with nothing so much as those cruel impositions of authority by which the "course of true love" was made subservient to the love of gold. But though parents and guardians may still be accessory, they are not the principal agents in this particular kind of worldly traffic. Those who speculate in this market now, are those who suffer most when the bargain is a losing one. They are the young men and young women who dare not think of marriage except where there is worldly benefit to be obtained, because they dare not meet society without being, in all outward embellishments, adorned for the occasion.

It cannot be any other kind of terror which deters from choosing where affection would direct. It cannot be a dread of personal privation. No; a young and noble-hearted man would spurn all privation in comparison with that of being for ever separated from the woman he loved. It cannot be

labour that he fears. That would be sweetened by affection. It is, in fact, that he wants the moral courage to begin the world with an establishment corresponding with humble means; and even if he in his own person was bold enough to deviate so far from the beaten track of custom, parents, friends, and relatives would all cry out against him, and therefore he cannot—dare not marry the portionless orphan girl, who has, perhaps, no other friend or protector in the world beside himself. Therefore — and here is the worst feature in the case—he enters into a heartless, joyless alliance with one, whose money purchases for him an establishment, and a place in society, while the world exults over him, as having made an excellent match.

But for one instance of this kind occurring amongst men, I believe there are twenty amongst women, of marriages entered into chiefly, if not entirely, from the dread of being old maids. I do not mean that the mere title of old maid constitutes the *whole* of the evil so much dreaded; but in connection with a single state, there are often consequences to be apprehended by women, which it requires moral courage in no trifling degree to meet calmly.

Hundreds upon hundreds of families respectably

brought up, and holding a high place in society, from living to the extent of their means, have little to support that respectability in the opinion of the world, when the original establishment is broken up, and each member is thrown upon their own share. It is then that a lone woman is lonely indeed. Perhaps she has enough to support her in decent lodgings, but she has been accustomed to invite her friends to a hospitable board, to be waited upon by her father's servants, and to be somebody in his house; how then is she to settle down as a mere spinster in lodgings?—too poor to give a party, and perhaps too proud to visit where she can no longer be looked upon in society as she was before? After having been accustomed to a large family, and a comfortable home, it requires more moral courage than most people are aware of, for a woman to live alone in humble lodgings, and yet feel neither dissatisfied nor degraded.

The exercise of moral courage, however, would help them over all this. It would stir them up perhaps to some useful and profitable employment, by which their time and talents would be occupied, their melancholy thoughts dispersed, and their moral dignity maintained. It would send them forth into society again wherever they were admitted,

feeling themselves denizens of a great world, as free to think and act as the monarch on his throne; while, disregarding the paltriness of personal feeling, they would escape many a rankling wound, to which others are subjected, and find many a healthy and natural channel through which to pour their benevolence into the great treasury of human kindness.

There is a far worse aspect of the case, however, than this, and that is, where the daughters of a family are left wholly unprovided for, and when on the death of their parents, they are obliged to go out into the world to provide for themselves. Why this should be so great a calamity as it is, belongs not to this portion of my work to examine; but there is great room to fear that this particular aspect of human affairs, is the means of frightening too many weak-minded women into unhappy marriages.

I confess I am no advocate for mere love-matches, made without *any* regard to worldly prudence; because our young people, and particularly our young women, must be very differently educated from what they are, before such a course of action could be anything but rash and ruinous in the extreme. Living as too many do for the world, the young people of the present day are ill-calculated

indeed to meet such consequences as would involve them in a loss of the world's esteem. Admiring as we do, and regarding as our chief good, those things which money alone can procure, how is it possible that happiness should be found in an ill-furnished home, even though love might for a while adorn it with roses? No; society must be very differently constituted from what it is, to admit of the heart and the affections having free exercise in fixing the marriage tie. But if ever there should come a time when the first flow of youth's best love, shall be more esteemed than a fashionable appearance; when to feel that there is one being in the world whose very life is bound up with ours, and to be always near that being, shall be more thought of, than to sit at the tables of the great; when an humble meal prepared by the hand of affection, shall be considered sweeter than the luxuries of the epicure; then may we hail the dawn of a fresh era of happiness—the commencement of a new moral existence to the sons and daughters of our land.

It is chiefly on the part of mothers, that we so much want some fresh effort to bring forward such an era, to induce young people to look away from the trivial things of the moment, onward to some greater, and more lasting good. How strange that we should have to point out to them, that one con-

siderable portion of that good, is the exercise of their affections, in the lot to which they consign themselves for life! Yet so it is. Such is the influence of an unhealthy atmosphere, that the taste becomes vitiated, and a preference at last is given to what is neither agreeable in itself, nor beneficial in its use; and such too frequently is the effect of breathing only the atmosphere of this world.

It may be said, however, with regard to worldly-minded persons, that whatever is most esteemed by the world, is what they believe to be best for them; and that, seeking material excellence as their chief good, they have in reality their heart's desire. It is true they have it, but do they enjoy it? or rather—for that is the question—do they enjoy it to the highest degree in which they are capable of enjoying anything? That they do to a certain extent enjoy what they possess, I am not prepared to dispute, because we have on every hand strong outward evidence of the extreme satisfaction felt on being more elegantly dressed, better equipped, and altogether in greater favour with the world, than our neighbours are; and I ask not, for I dare not ask, how often such enjoyment is only an escape from misery; how often the secret soul rebels against its bondage, and returns to its early and voluntary allegiance; or how often persons thus

situated endeavour to be contented with what they are, because it is too late to aspire to be what they might have been.

We must not forget that there is a spirit at work amonst the affairs of men, who has been appropriately represented as saying—

"Evil, be thou my good:"

and when we fix our ideas of excellence upon low and trivial things, because we have not moral courage to look beyond the narrow prejudices of society; when we dare not pursue that as good, which would really be so to us, because it is not sanctioned by the approbation of the world; we are in reality perverting the moral order of the universe, and frustrating the gracious designs of Providence, in giving us higher capabilities for happiness than we choose to exercise.

Nor is there any need for mothers to be discouraged in this great and good work, although the voice of society should sometimes be raised against their efforts. They have unquestionably, a right to train up their children in that way which appears to them most conducive to real happiness; and if amongst conflicting opinions, they are not always able to see clearly the direct point at which to aim, let them remember this simple rule—All

those sources of enjoyment which call forth such faculties and emotions as we are taught by the Scriptures to believe will constitute part of the enjoyments of heaven, must be worthy of cultivation in a state of existence which ought to be a preparation for a happy eternity; while all those sources of enjoyment which call forth faculties limited in their exercise to this world alone, must be of an inferior nature, and worthy only of a much lower portion of regard.

It is then to this ultimate and superior good that mothers should teach their children to look, and at the same time so fortify their minds by moral courage, that they shall dare to choose it in preference to the inferior, even though the world in general may condemn their choice.

CHAP. VIII.

GENERAL DUTIES OF A MOTHER.

In pursuing the course of observations which have thus far occupied our attention, much has already been said upon the importance of keeping the moral atmosphere of home in a healthy state, and perhaps too little in relation to the bodily health of children; yet how many of the sufferings of later life might be traced to neglect of this kind, or perhaps to mistaken tenderness, rather than neglect.

To be always pleasing children, always gratifying their appetites, always giving them something nice, appears to be the ruling passion with some indulgent mothers, forgetful of the fact, that this is the certain means of keeping up a very unnatural and unhealthy state both of mind and body. Yet it is astonishing how far a small allowance of sweets may be made to go, in the way of

giving pleasure, if carefully husbanded, and judiciously dealt out; while a constant revelling amongst good things, has invariably the effect of injuring the temper, as well as the stomach.

Whether owing to the climate of England, or some peculiarity in our habits and constitutions, it is not my business here to enquire, but there certainly exists amongst English people, something unfavourable to the healthy action of the digestive powers; and hence follows a long catalogue of uncomfortable sensations, scarcely to be classed under the head of disease, which beset the mind as well as the body, and assail most effectually what are called the animal spirits. In the management of children, it is consequently of the utmost importance that attention should be directed to this peculiarity of English constitutions, for of all maladies, those which overwhelm the mind with causeless apprehensions, weaken the resolution, and render the temper irritable, are the most to be dreaded.

Children who are always eating, though they eat but little at a time, are almost always ill-tempered; because there is a constant state of excitement kept up, which effectually destroys the healthy tone of the mind; and while they make themselves and every body near them uncomfort-

able, they are perpetually seeking to allay the craving of a diseased appetite, by urgent applications for some fresh indulgence, which is granted them at least as often for peace' sake, as for love. Occasionally, with such children the excessive excitement under which they labour, assumes the character of fever, and illness. The doctor is then sent for. Medicines disguised in every possible way, and powders wrapped up in every imaginable confection, are administered; and as the patient recovers, the old habits by degrees are resumed, with the addition of more good things to tempt a weak appetite, and greater frequency of food to supply the strength which has been lost.

Now, if mothers could but be made to try it, I believe they would invariably find, that a certain number of meals, consisting of plain food, at regular intervals every day, with nothing between, would make their children both healthier, happier, and better tempered, than all the good things they are in the habit of administering; to say nothing of the beneficial effect upon their future lives, which would be likely to ensue from a system of diet calculated to place them above the degrading slavery of mere animal appetite. With regard to sweets, too, if they are given out sparingly at certain hours of the day, and never at any other—never

when cried for, nor even to cure a cut finger, or a bruised knee, they will give incalculably more real gratification, because they will require no teasing for, and, being sure to be given out at a certain time, can occasion no disappointment.

Those constant teasings on the part of children, which we hear in some families, those half refusals on the part of the mother, and those ungracious givings at last, because teased out of patience, though ruinous alike to peace and temper, are perhaps of all domestic evils the most easily prevented; because habit does so much with children, that if they have never been accustomed to eat between meals, and have never had sweets given them except at certain times, they will no more fret themselves to obtain such indulgences, than they will cry because the sun does not rise in the night.

Next in importance to regularity and moderation in diet, is exercise in the open air; and, as often as it can be obtained, the free wild exercise of country life, even at the risk of torn dresses, crushed bonnets, and soiled shoes; all of which articles, however, should be provided of such a nature as to create no very poignant distress when they happen to be a little worse for being worn.

It is not the mere *air*, nor the mere *exercise*,

though both are good, which produces the whole of the benefit derived by children from country sports. It is the immense variety of situations in which they may be placed, which gives them an energy, a fertility of resource, and, above all, a courage and self-possession, extremely difficult to acquire in the limited range of town amusements. In the country, too, children may try their skill, their adroitness, and their activity in a thousand ways, which would be neither safe nor suitable in a town; and therefore it is, that children, brought up in the country, though sometimes appearing ignorant as regards the technicalities of polished life, have often within themselves a fund of resource which helps them over innumerable difficulties, and a fund of amusement, too, which supplies them with perpetual cheerfulness.

As soon as children are old enough to ride with safety, horse-exercise affords one of the most exhilarating and delightful amusements of the country. Let them learn to ride without fear, to accommodate themselves to the different movements of their pony, so as not to be thrown up into the air, to drop down again like a dead weight; and let them learn, too, what to do on the instant when a horse starts, rears, or strikes off into a gallop; and they will then have learned, besides

the art of riding, a great deal that will be serviceable to them in after life.

But they should learn, in addition to the art of riding, the nature and habits of the horse. So noble, sagacious, and beautiful an animal, is well worthy of their study. They should be instructed in its muscular construction, and especially the wonderful adaptation of its feet and legs to the purposes in which it is rendered so serviceable to man; and they should also learn the action and the use of the bridle, with all the other trappings and accoutrements of a horse, so that in case of accident, such as the turning of a saddle, or the breaking of a rein, they need not give themselves up to useless terror, but set about doing the right thing at the right time.

I mention more particularly these apparently trivial things, because I am convinced there is not sufficient use made, in the education of children, of such common means of exciting interest, and conveying information at the same time; and because it is not in the act of riding alone, but throughout the whole training of children, that too little pains are taken to make them thoroughly acquainted with what they are about. As a mere dead lesson taught in a close schoolroom, it is probable that the mind of a child would with difficulty

be made to receive any lasting or correct idea of the character of a horse; but on a clear fresh morning in the country, while riding by the side of a kind and intelligent father, everything told to a child about the lively little animal, which carries it along so cheerfully, pricking its ears at every movement in the hawthorn hedge, keeping pace with its more majestic companion, and determined not to be outdone, either in a light gallop over the rebounding turf, or a leap over the little brook which crosses the way—everything told to a child about a creature so intensely interesting as its own pony, is sure to be listened to and remembered. Nor is it in the act of riding it alone that the child finds delight. There is the fetching it up out of the field, and the merry turning out—a sight worth seeing both by old and young; for what can be more graceful than the light movements and free play of a high-spirited and beautiful horse?

But we must not leave this subject without reminding the mother, that it is one which demands her peculiar care, as regards her boys. It is a generally acknowledged fact, that the class of men whose business consists in the training and management of horses are amongst the last whose society a prudent mother would choose for her

sons. If therefore, the father, or other members of the family, cannot take charge of this department in the education of children, it would be better a thousand times that they should never learn to ride, than learn this delightful art at the risk of association with grooms and stable-boys. Indeed, the first symptom which developes itself in a boy, of a tendency to the swagger of jockeyship, ought to be regarded with the most serious apprehensions; for how many instances does the dark catalogue of crime afford, of hopeful youths led astray in the first instance by their taste for the stable and the turf, whose career in the end has been most degraded and ruinous!

With regard to the exercise of riding, then, as well as with a vast number of other amusements, which may under certain circumstances be rendered not only lawful but beneficial to young people, this rule ought to be observed—that unless the parents, or friends whom they depute in their stead, can take the whole matter into their own hands, the amusement itself should not be thought of; and this rule I believe will hold good with regard to visiting, reading, and a variety of other things, which may or may not be objectionable, according to the associations with which they are accompanied. There are many books, for instance,

which parents may occasionally read to children with safety, accompanied by their own observations, but which, if read alone and in secret, would produce a very different impression upon the youthful mind. If therefore, I repeat, parents cannot, or will not, take the whole conduct and responsibility of these indulgences into their own hands, they had infinitely better narrow the sphere of their children's amusements than allow them to be enjoyed at so great a risk.

In speaking of the books to be allowed or forbidden in a family, I do not feel myself called upon to lay down, or even to suggest, any rule. Indeed, it would appear to me a little too much like presumption to dictate on a point of duty belonging so exclusively to the decision of parents, and depending so entirely upon their individual views and habits. So far as may be practicable, I should wish more particularly to direct the attention of the reader to those points of duty which are too little thought of, but upon which all who think seriously and impartially are agreed. Under this class we may safely place the rule, that nothing should be done clandestinely in a family —that there should be such a feeling of confidence inspired by the parents, and such habits of freedom and candour encouraged amongst their

children, as would tend very much to do away with all temptation to deceive.

In order to effect this, however, there must be considerable allowance made for the difference betwixt youth and age. We should never forget that the one is going up the hill, the other down —the one looking out from the windows of the soul upon an untried world; the other returning, weary of that world, to the retirement of the soul again. There should be great allowance made also, for the progressive changes in society, for the spread of intelligence, the expansion of thought, and the gradual advance of intellectual attainments in every walk of life.

We have long since passed that stage of civilization in which safety was regarded as consisting in narrowing up the mind of youth, and it is our business now, to find out how safety may be made consistent with expansion. In the first place, I should say, by clear, honourable, and straightforward treatment at home. There should be no deception on the part of the mother, no false excuses even to obtain a good end, no calling hard things by soft names, or other modes of practising upon the credulity of childhood. Even in cases of illness, let medicine be medicine, though wrapped up in jelly; and do not pretend

when it has to be administered, that you are offering only a delicious treat. A well-managed child, accustomed to habits of implicit obedience, will take its medicine knowing what it is, simply because it must be taken, and because it believes that its mother will not require it to do anything contrary to its real good; while the child at first deceived into the belief that what is offered is only currant-jelly, will in all probability detect the trick, and ever afterwards exhibit a tenfold strength of determination to resist.

But even where such practices are not discovered by the child, there is a moral meanness on the part of the mother, in making such a system the rule of her conduct towards her family. If she is truly beloved and esteemed, she will have influence enough to enforce a direct obedience to her wishes, and in case of resistance, she will have sufficient authority to command.

In all families there will necessarily be the occurrence of circumstances, or subjects of discussion, with which the junior members cannot with propriety be made acquainted. These, however, are such as require no deception to conceal, because there is no necessity for their being talked about, or even hinted at, before children. Nothing is more common with mothers than to send their

children out of the way on false pretences—to go and play in the garden, or to see what the nurse is doing, when in reality their absence is all that is desired. To a noble and generous nature, there is something revolting in this mode of treatment; and I feel assured that all children accustomed to look to a high moral standard, would be better and happier to be sent out of the room every day because their parents wished to talk about something not suitable for them to hear, than once to detect those parents in having got rid of them by a false pretence.

In these, as well as all other cases in which they could understand it, children should be admitted to know the very heart of their mother. They should not be left by chance to discover that they have been intruding upon her privacy, and that because she thought them too selfish and unreasonable to bear to know the truth, she invented a pretext for getting rid of their company without offending their vanity. Such discoveries, whether made by the young or the old, have invariably the effect of destroying confidence, and estranging affection. Everything, then, which tends to destroy that open, generous, upright spirit, which ought to pervade the atmosphere of home, is as much to be feared, as that which leads into more

obvious and direct evil; because it operates upon the moral constitution of children, and consequently tells upon their future lives.

In the formation of character it makes an immense difference, whether we aim at what is great, or what is little. There is a feebleness of resolution, a littleness of purpose, and a puerility of character altogether, which may be both amiable and respectable, in its way, but it must ever be in a small way; and while I should be sorry indeed to recommend anything likely to be destructive to simplicity, I feel convinced in my own mind, that true nobility of character will always be found associated with a certain degree of simplicity of heart.

Eagerness to obtain immediate gratification, to snatch at individual good, and to reap the harvest as soon as the seed is sown, is not only the characteristic of childhood, but of all stages of life, with those who never attain a moral dignity beyond that of children. To prove that the possession of an expected pleasure does not really do good, or that the privation of it does not really do harm, is a part of the discipline exercised by Divine wisdom. It is a lesson we all have to learn, and the sooner the better; for having learned this lesson, the eagerness of what may be called an appetite for pleasure is allayed, and the mind is enabled to

stretch onward to that greater good, which, in so many instances, can only be obtained by intermediate suffering and endurance.

Patient waiting for a long-expected issue, with unabated efforts steadily directed to one point, an eye fixed intently upon one object of attainment, and not diverted by intervening things—these all belong to true greatness of character; and they are more especially worthy of our attention, as forming parts of the Christian character too; for where would be the exercise of faith, if *things hoped for* were immediately seen?

In the formation of a noble, and even of a useful character, great importance should be attached to the keeping of a promise, but great regard should also be paid to the act of forming it. Some persons think they have resolved, when they have merely said to themselves they will do a thing; and others again, think they have resolved, when they have made no calculation of the difficulties to be encountered. In order to keep our resolution firm and inviolate, we should not play with it. We should not use it hastily, or often, but rather keep it in reserve, as a sacred power with which we are invested, and which it would be an abuse of one of the best gifts of God to man, to trifle with, weaken, or destroy

Children especially should be taught to think well before they resolve; but having formed a resolution, they ought to be encouraged by all means to keep it. All promises should also be scrupulously kept *with* them, even at the cost of some annoyance to their parents or friends. It is related of Lord Chatham, that having promised his son to see the pulling down of a garden wall, he happened to forget this promise, and had it pulled down in his absence. Yet so strong was his feeling of the importance of what he had done, that he ordered his workmen to build up the wall again, in order that his son might witness the downfall he had anticipated with so much interest.

It seems strange that all the world should concur in admiring a character of spotless integrity, and yet take so little pains to maintain it in the young, when we know that every deviation from the direct line of rectitude on the part of parents, must necessarily tend to obscure that line in the minds of their children, who look up to them as examples, and who are more influenced by the general conduct of those with whom they associate, than by the force of argument, or the persuasion of eloquence. The manner in which they are treated, then, should be firm, upright, and clear.

There should be no confusion of contending motives; no aiming at one thing, and pretending to aim at another. Even in reasoning with them, things should be spoken of as they are, not merely as their parents wish them to be.

It is astonishing how far some well-meaning persons seem to think they can stretch the credulity of youth, by representing the allurements of the world as no allurements at all. When it was so much the fashion to admire Lord Byron, that young people scarcely admired any other author, many good persons, without the least talent for criticism, felt it their duty to depreciate him as a poet; while perhaps the very individuals they addressed, had their minds so imbued with the true spirit of poetry, as to feel their understandings insulted, at the same time that their taste was offended, by a mode of reasoning from data so evidently false.

It is thus with much that is too pleasing in the world. We wish it was otherwise; but since it *is* pleasing, and especially so to youth, we gain nothing by denying the fact, or by speaking in disparaging terms of what is really the very thing they most desire. There must, with children, and with all in whose feelings we wish to produce a radical change, be a certain kind of meeting half

way, a candid acknowledgment of the truth, so far as it goes, even when most opposed to our wishes; or by what means are they to be made to believe, that we enter so far into their feelings as to sympathize with them, and so far into the case itself as to understand it?

Towards the support of true dignity of character, many things are required, which would not, on first looking at the subject, appear to be at all essential. Amongst these I would class a habit which ought to be made part of the education of children—that of always speaking and behaving well at home. Two sets of manners, one for the home circle, and one for the circle of society to which they are occasionally admitted, are sure to produce the effect of making a character only half what it ought to be. It is as easy to learn to speak well, as to speak otherwise; and where the language of the fireside is always correct, there can be no danger of being guilty of vulgarisms on public occasions.

We are too apt to confuse the two ideas of good society, and society above us. It is in the power of all united and intelligent families, to make their own society good, by adopting such habits and manners at home, as they would wish to be distinguished by abroad. By never having indulged in

vulgar habits, or made use of a phraseology unfitted for the best society, and by never having been accustomed to blunt or awkward manners, a young person will be spared the suffering of much of that shyness and embarrassment, which are the painful experience of those who only behave well when they go into company; and who thus lay themselves open to the suspicion of acting a part which is foreign to their feelings; at the same time that they reveal the secret of an absence of good breeding in their homes and families.

There are persons, however, whose behaviour is pleasant and obliging enough to their equals, whether at home or abroad, yet to those whom they consider their inferiors, the very reverse; so that the very fact of any one with whom they have to communicate, being poor, ill-dressed, or in a dependent situation, seems to justify them in laying aside entirely their good manners. The less, then, that children are allowed to consider good manners as something apart from themselves, something put on for a purpose or an occasion, to be laid aside when no longer needed, the more likely they will be to act consistently in an amiable and obliging manner; and if carefully taught by their parents that they have no more right to be rude to one class of persons than to another, they

will be preserved from much that is objectionable in the conduct of ill-bred families. In this, however, as in so many other instances, the mother's whole character, her daily and hourly conduct, and the moral atmosphere in which her children live, will operate more advantageously than all her arguments, or even her entreaties.

If, in the first place, mothers are careful in the choice of their servants, and faithful in the discharge of their duty towards them, they will experience neither difficulty nor danger in studiously inculcating towards them a kind and respectful behaviour on the part of their children; and especially that consideration which is always due to those who spend their lives in labouring for our comfort and convenience, with no other reward than their necessary food and clothing. The easy manner in which servants are got rid of, and their places supplied by others; but more particularly the manner in which they are too frequently spoken of, sometimes as necessary evils, and sometimes as parties infinitely obliged by our permitting them to work for us; the patient subserviency of this class of persons, their willingness to serve us, and the uncomplaining manner in which they carry on the drudgery of every day, all tend to impress the minds of children with an idea, that it is but a

matter of course, what people are born to, and therefore worthy of no sort of consideration, that servants should labour all their lives, and that we should enjoy the fruits of their labour.

Although one would scarcely venture to recommend so deplorable an expedient, as that a household should be without servants for a week, or a month, in order to inspire a higher sense of their value; yet there are innumerable methods, which ought not to be neglected, of teaching children that they are under an obligation to respectable and obliging servants, which nothing can so well repay, as to convince them, by our behaviour, that we perpetually bear in mind, not only what may add to their comfort and convenience, but also what may make their hard lot harder than it is; and this can be shown in so many pleasant ways, without being too familiar, that one would almost suppose the mistress of a house, herself a well-bred woman, would consider it an essential part of good manners, that her children should be well-behaved and considerate towards servants, as well as towards persons in their own sphere of life.

Above all things degrading to the moral dignity of a family, is a practice not uncommon with a certain class of women, though happily a small

one, of encouraging their children to watch the habits of servants, and tell tales out of the kitchen. All well-regulated families constitute one party, the servants as much bound to the interests of their master and mistress, as the higher members of the household are to those of the lower; and no sooner is a system of espionage established, and a habit acquired of acting *for* one party in the establishment *against* another, then the fall predicted of the house divided against itself, may with certainty be anticipated. Children, in fact, should never be made partisans in anything. Whatever our own prejudices, or even suspicions, may be, their minds should be left unbiassed, except so far as relates to actual facts; and where facts are unfavourable on the part of servants, the sooner such servants are got rid of the better, even though in some respects they may be suited exactly to our particular purpose.

But at the same time that it is highly desirable for children to be effectually prevented from assuming a premature lordship and dominion over servants, and more especially from regarding as unworthy of consideration all which relates to their comfort and accommodation; they ought, on the other hand, to be carefully guarded against making themselves a party *with* servants, either in

obtaining their own ends in opposition to their parents, or serving the selfish purposes of servants in any other way. All symptoms of the society of this class of persons being a favourite indulgence to the young, is an omen of danger which ought not to be disregarded; and above everything they should be kept away from their bed-rooms, as well as from every other place where servants are privileged to carry on their own peculiar style of conversation, unrestrained by any fear of intrusion.

With every possible allowance for the defective education of this class of persons, and with the highest esteem for the general character of a truly respectable servant, I still think that the best of them are too much under the influence of false and limited views of things in general, to admit of their being desirable companions for children in their moments of unrestrained confidence. But when we speak of those who are not the best, especially of those artful and unprincipled characters who endeavour to work their way by flattering the vanity, or falling in with the wrong feelings of their superiors, it is impossible to express too strongly the sense which all reasonable persons must entertain, of the dangerous consequences likely to ensue from association with such individuals,

even in the nursery, where the influence of the mother might be supposed most likely to impose a certain degree of restraint.

What shall we say, however, where the mother is a party implicated, and where the habit of telling depreciating stories of other people's children, is made a means of gaining favour, at the same time that it must awaken in the minds of the young, the worst feelings of human nature—envy, and jealousy of those above them, and contempt for those whom they imagine to be beneath? For, independently of the false ideas of merit which are thus affixed to their notions of fine dresses, and personal beauty, abundant supplies of money, and other considerations of merely casual and inferior importance, the calling into operation by such means a contemptuous or bitter feeling towards their fellow-creatures, is, perhaps, the greatest injury which it is in the power of a mother to inflict upon her children. Yet how often in the mere momentary pastime of the nursery, do mothers and nurses wield these fatal weapons, so deadly in the warfare they wage against human happiness! How often does the vulgar observation, that Miss C— is beautifully dressed, but does not become her dress so well as Miss B—, awaken calculations of low rivalry, and

thoughts inimical to all nobility of feeling in the breast of a young listener, who pines to be outshining a neighbour's child, where she is foolishly led to believe that her triumph would be complete!

It seems to be our business here to look only at the dark side of human nature, but there is yet another feature in the moral training of the nursery, to which allusion must be made. I have thus far said little of the position which a father holds in his family, yet this I believe it will always be in the power of the mother to render exalted and dignified, or directly the reverse. We have all heard of such a thing—perhaps some of us have seen it—as a mother making a party with her children to oppose the wishes or authority of their father. We have heard of secret cabals in the nursery, and little deceptions practised in the parlour, and hints given, and expressive looks exchanged, and little speeches made, which had been planned beforehand to produce a particular effect—and of all this being made to constitute a system of behaviour by which a father was to be duped by his own children, and his *wife!* And painful as it is to believe that meanness so degrading should be found to exist on the part of women, there is but too much reason to fear that from

the absence of clear views, and sound principles, from having had recourse to artifice, to make the domestic machine move smoothly, and from having once fallen into a low and grovelling mode of conduct in little things, an approach to this system, if not actually the extreme of it, is practised on the part of many women, whose feelings would revolt from the base and unqualified idea of acting ungenerously towards their husbands, and their children, at the same time.

There are many persons who will serve us personally to the utmost of their power, who will not be faithful to us. There are many who will wait upon us when we are ill, who scruple not to make one of a party against us. There are many who spend their strength in adding to our bodily enjoyments, who will not guard our moral dignity, nor preserve us from mental suffering. There are many women who love their husbands, and do not honour them—perhaps some who cannot; and such women never know the whole of the difficulties of their lot, until they have children to bring up, and to instruct in their filial duties. But still even in these cases, there is much that a faithful wife may do towards establishing a right feeling betwixt her husband and her children, by screening his faults from observation; and where

they are too obvious for concealment, by speaking of them with pity, rather than with blame; by dwelling with tenderness and constancy upon those features in his character which present a more favourable aspect; and by setting an example of giving honour where honour is due, simply because it has pleased the Allwise Disposer of human events, to place her and her children in an inferior situation as regards their father.

It must be granted, however, that there are cases in which men *will not* be dignified, and influential in their own families, nor can anybody make them so; and where also, with great propriety, they give up their share in the management of their children entirely to the mother. Yet here again, a right-minded woman possessed of tact and delicacy of feeling, will so exercise her delegated authority, as that it shall appear to her children to be willingly conceded on the part of her husband, and not possessed by her as an unquestionable right.

But there are even worse cases than these, where parents cannot agree in their ideas of what is best for their children; and without presuming to interfere where no third party has any right to meddle, I can only urge upon the mother thus situated, never to allow disputes betwixt her and her hus-

band to take place before other members of the family—never to allow them even to suppose that such disputes do arise to disturb the secret current of domestic happiness.

So much has been said by writers of every description upon the depth and the tenderness of maternal love, that to enlarge upon such a theme would be only to echo the sentiments of every human heart. But we must not forget, that while wholly given up to this feeling, so sacred in itself, there is such a thing as neglecting, for the sake of the luxury it affords, the duty of a wife. Yes; there is such a thing as forgetting, when the father returns home, that it ought to be to a scene of order, harmony, and comfort. There is such a thing as forgetting, that the personal beauty, the neatness, and the grace which first charmed his fancy, gives place to a meagre substitute for him, in the forlornness, and neglect of the devoted nurse. There is such a thing as forgetting, that however interesting children may be, they ought never to occupy the attention of their mother, to the exclusion of their father, or his affairs. It is true, that unlike them, he is competent to manage his affairs himself; but it deserves no milder name than cruelty, when a father is made to feel jealous of his own children—when that love, which in the first

instance, was solemnly and tenderly pledged to support and comfort him for life, is thus unnecessarily torn from its allegiance, to be concentrated where he has at least an equal right to share in the benefits it is calculated to bestow upon all, without diminishing the share of any.

It is possible even to love in a selfish manner. Whenever the heart is fixed upon one object, to the exclusion of all others, affection partakes of this character; and wherever a mother thus doats upon her children, she is guilty of an act of unfaithfulness to her husband, at the same time that she places herself in a perilous position, from whence the first shock of disease, or the first symptom of ingratitude, may cast her down into utter wretchedness.

We must endeavour then to make our affections, as well as our talents, answer the ends for which they were designed by a wise and merciful Creator. They must not be narrowed up so as to contract those streams of benevolence so much needed in a state of vicissitude like our present life; nor must they be concentrated into one focus, so as to burn with dangerous and destructive intensity. This kind of love is one which neither gives, nor receives, the happiness for which love was designed. It is in fact only a species of refined selfishness,

not less requiring in its demands, than it is jealous of offence, and quick to be revenged, whenever the interests of the beloved one are supposed to be invaded.

The nature of true affection is diffusive and benevolent. It possesses the rare property of not being expended by exercise, nor weakened by expansion; and the mother who, as a Christian woman, loves supremely the highest Object of all affection, who lives in charity with the whole human race, who loves her country and her kindred because they are such, and who feels that every member of the great family of earth has a claim upon her sympathy and her kindness, is not more likely to—

> "forget the child
> That smiled so sweetly on her knee,"

than if she loved that child alone, and for its sake, excluded from her bosom all feeling of sympathy and affection for every other creature in the world.

CHAP. IX.

HINTS ON EDUCATION.

It has been said by Miss Hamilton, that "to be truly estimable in the eyes of her offspring, a mother should be capable of educating them herself;" and certainly where this is the case, the mistress of a household gains much in her influence over the junior members. Yet there is too much reason to fear it would be a hopeless task with mothers in general, to attempt to persuade them to undertake, more frequently than they do, the practical part of the education of their children; to set apart one hour, and no more, for the reception of morning calls; and if one of the two departments must be given up, to leave the kitchen rather than the school-room, to the management of those less interested than themselves, in what will be the result of the operations there carried on.

To such as may be disposed to turn the exercise of their talents into this natural and suitable channel, there is one encouraging circumstance ever to be borne in mind, and that is, the incomparable advantages possessed by a mother over other teachers, in the intellectual as well as the moral education of her children. In this respect the concentration of a mother's interests in one point, and the constancy of her endeavours to attain it through a length of time which has no definite termination, place her in a situation highly favourable for undertaking the education of her children; and if, in some respects, she may be less qualified than others, whose services may be obtained by paying for them, surely a mother's love, a mother's watchfulness, and a mother's earnest zeal for the good of her children, might weigh in the balance against a little extra Latin or Greek.

There is one circumstance also, on the other side of the question, which ought to be noticed, though by no means unkindly, as regards the hired teacher, who looks very naturally to an immediate result—to as much credit as can possibly be obtained by the education or training of one set of pupils, expecting always to have to pass on to another set; while the mother knows that in her

own family centres all her duty, and if rightly discharged there, her reward will be sure. To the hired teacher, each particular child, even the only one in a family, and the pride of its mother's heart, constitutes but one article in the general business of life, to be treated like hundreds of others, turned over, and disposed of, as creditably as time and circumstances will allow. Even to a serious-minded and strictly conscientious teacher, deeply sensible of the responsibilities attendant upon the education of youth, such a child is but one amongst the many, perhaps neither attractive nor interesting in itself, and sometimes requiring the utmost stretch of patience and forbearance to exercise towards it common justice. Where such, then, is all the feeling this child is capable of inspiring towards itself, surely the mother's love, and the mother's care, must be needed to carry on its education to the best advantage, so that it shall neither be overlooked, despised, nor set aside as unworthy of the attention which it is often so much more pleasant to bestow upon others.

And here I would wish to whisper into the ear of partial mothers, if I could without offending them, that the child which they esteem both beautiful and attractive, is often neither the one nor the other to an impartial observer; that the

raptures which are expressed by the company around the dinner-table, when the little darling is introduced with the dessert, are no sort of proof that the object of them is really charming in itself; and that one-half of those apparently interested inquirers, who ask about its age, its teeth, its walking, and its peculiar habits, and who declare that in all these particulars it surpasses any other child they know, or at least all the children of their mutual friends, would say pretty much the same, if the heir of the house should appear toothless, bald, and shrivelled, and with every feature of his face distorted. I speak of only half the indiscriminate admirers of children, when I venture upon these remarks; and when we recollect that the other half do really admire them, from the impulse which nature has kindly given to so many human hearts, and without the slightest reference to individual charms—when we recollect that there are persons who can scarcely pass a baby in the street without an inclination to embrace it, there is little indeed left for the fond mother to build her faith upon, in the flattering reception with which her child is welcomed by her guests.

I believe all mothers are sensible of the absurdity of flattery thus bestowed upon the children of their neighbours, and there are many quick-sighted and

impartial enough to detect it when bestowed upon their own; but, alas! there are others, who forget, at the very moment they should remember, that their lengthy and minute details of the affairs of the nursery, are calculated only for those moments of confidential intercourse, in which the ear of true friendship is not too severely tried by listening, and in which friendship, indeed, would not deserve the name, if it could not cordially enter into all the minutiæ of what must naturally be so near the mother's heart.

Making all due allowance, then, for the darling of the family being but an ordinary child, to those who look upon it with impartial eyes, we must leave the question of home-education to the conscience and the feelings of parents, assured that this important question must ever be subject to an endless variety of considerations, such as the individuals concerned can only take into account; and since there are occasionally instances of weak and injudicious mothers, fathers whose example is a hinderance to the progress of good education, houses in which neither order nor regularity can be found, and families in which the world may be said to be their household god, we ought to be thankful that there are public schools to which children can be sent, and teachers to be

met with, whose laborious and faithful exertions are but ill requited by the small and grudging pittance usually offered as the reward of their labours.

In the choice of a school, or of any other mode of education, mothers should be especially careful to be clear in their own views, as to what it is they are aiming at in the education of their children; and as this work is addressed particularly to individuals in the middle class of society, I would urge upon them the importance of remembering, that one great aim in the education of this class of persons in England, should be to dignify the sphere of life to which they belong, not to creep up into another.

We are often told that a liberal education is wanted; but we do not always understand what is meant by this—whether an education liberally paid for, or an education conducted upon liberal principles. If the latter, we must bear in mind, that the great enemy to liberal education is prejudice; and that there are school prejudices—may I not venture to say—college prejudices also? as well as the prejudices of home.

Again, we hear of a genteel education being wanted; and when this is not likely to be acquired at home, we cannot wonder at some pains being taken to procure it abroad; but I own I have won-

dered that mothers thus situated, should choose for their daughters, perhaps raw girls from the country, those high seminaries in town, of which it is said, by way of recommendation, that none besides children of the highest classes are admitted, and where the expenses are beyond the reach of common people. I have wondered, because in the first place, what must be the sufferings of an awkward, ignorant, and timid girl, when placed in such a situation? and in the second, after being drilled into the different ceremonies of polite education, after having acquired a taste for fashionable habits, and a love for all that belongs to aristocratic life, what must be her difficulties on again returning to a home, where the remembrance of these things can only be revived by the perusal of court calendars and novels?

But we are told—and here the subject assumes a more serious character—that a religious education is wanted; and certainly where one or both the parents of a family are themselves deficient in religious knowledge, but especially where they are defective in religious principle, where, for instance, the father is a man whose conduct and conversation are such as to render the atmosphere of home ungenial to the growth of religious feeling, the mother does wisely, most wisely, to send her chil-

dren beyond the reach of such powerfully contaminating influence, until their own characters are sufficiently established, and their own views so far confirmed, as to render it less likely to be injurious to their best interests.

The situation of mothers thus circumstanced, is one which claims our deepest, tenderest sympathy; and if for no other class of persons, for them alone, it would be well worth all the labour required by the routine of school-learning, and all the anxiety and pains bestowed upon the forming of different systems of education, to provide the children of such parents with a place of refuge from the many temptations and disadvantages of their lot, as well as with a temporary home more favourable to the cultivation of religious principles than their own. If for no other class of persons, we ought to be thankful for the sake of these, that there are noble-minded individuals, willing to spend their talents and their time in the most laborious of all occupations; at the same time that it is one, which, in a worldly point of view, receives the smallest portion of reward. We ought to be thankful that there are those, who, in the discharge of this onerous but sacred duty, yield to no prejudice which requires a compromise of principle, and shrink from no labour which human strength can

sustain; but patiently, faithfully, and without hope of reward, except in a future state, and from Him who seeth in secret, and to whom alone is really known the incalculable difficulties of their peculiar lot, go on from month to month, and from year to year, sacrificing daily, and sometimes nightly rest, nay, almost every other personal indulgence, for the sake of training up young persons from whom *they* never can receive the love of children; and for the sake of forming characters, whose highest, noblest, and most attractive qualifications, will pass from under their view, and perhaps never again in this world be recognized by *them*.

After looking seriously at the situation of mothers who are really unable to educate their own children, at the situation of those who cannot hope to preserve them from contamination at home; after considering the immense responsibility and labour of those who undertake the management of schools, it seems strange that parents do not generally consider it as part of their duty, to see that justice is done in committing their children to the care of comparative strangers. It seems strange that there should be any mothers found so ungenerous, and inconsiderate, as to hold up to their children the prospect of going to school, by way of threatening them

with a punishment, rather than indulging them with a privilege. Yet so it is; and those who undertake the most difficult of all duties, have too often to contend with a prejudice in the minds of the young, against that mode of instruction which is carried on from home, or rather, in other words, against being sent to school. Thus we often hear mothers say—"If you do not apply yourself to your lessons, or if you do not mind what I say, you shall be sent away to school." Yet even this threat is scarcely so influential upon the minds of children, as the feasting and revelry of home during the short season of holiday life which children sent to school occasionally enjoy, and which, when compared with the dull routine of daily tasks, and the plain substantial food it is necessary to provide where many have to be fed, during the rest of the year, presents a contrast by no means favourable to the scholastic view of the subject, though in reality the young pupil is often happier at school than at home.

Indeed, if we were to judge of happiness by healthy cheerful looks, and by general contentment of appearance and manners, we should be compelled to say, that school had often greatly the advantage over home; for what with indulgence, over-eating, and want of regular employment, the

holiday life is apt to close with little satisfaction beyond the feeling that it has come to an end; while the return to school habits, and school discipline again, is attended with no other regret, than what may easily be traced to a spoiled temper, and a disordered stomach.

But treating the subject more seriously, I would ask, Is all this just, to those who take the children back under their care, about as much injured as it is possible to be in the space of time set apart for relaxation? Is it just, to permit children to think that home, if they might but be permitted to remain there, would be always the same as it appears to them during the holidays · and that school is a place of punishment, from which if they could but escape, they should be always doing as they liked, always eating good things, and consequently always happy? Is it just, to put them upon making comparisons, to elicit from them confessions as to what they endure in the way of privation, what things are mean, what things are wanting to comfort, and wherein they might easily be more indulged than they are? Yet all this is done again and again, and then it is regretted that children are not fond of school.

But is it really regretted? No; the secret lies here. There is a paltry kind of jealousy in the

minds of some mothers, lest their children should derive as large a portion of enjoyment from others, as from themselves. They do not wish them to be made happy, so much as they wish to be the makers of their happiness. They wish, in fact, that their children should look to them as the sole fountain of indulgence and pleasure; and in order to accomplish this selfish purpose, they are willing to assist in persuading them that they are miserable during ten months of the year.

We gladly turn, however, from the contemplation of such practices, to the situation of a mother, who, conscious of her own inability to conduct the intellectual education of her children, holds her trust as a parent too sacred, to permit her to confide the whole of their moral training to another. Such will of course have recourse to the plan of engaging teachers in their own families, in which case, the mother, if she be a judicious woman, can with the greatest propriety take the general charge and oversight of her children's education, so far at least as she fully understands it. And without much learning herself, she may often understand with what particular faculties her children are naturally endowed, in what respects they require to be urged on, and in what restrained, with many other points of the utmost

importance to be known in conducting their education.

The mother too must know, or at any rate she ought to know, what are the remote objects to be kept in view in the training and culture of her children's minds. As when one sense, particularly that of sight, is defective, some of the others may be quickened to such a degree as to supply its deficiency; so, where one mental faculty is defective, the mother will be aware that others ought to be so cultivated as to supply its place. She will be able to understand the difference betwixt a mere mechanical memory, and a memory depending upon cause and effect; and therefore when told that one of her children is a good historian because it remembers dates, she will turn with satisfaction to another, who is defective in dates, because she knows that he can remember the spirit of the history he reads.

These examples are but specimens of a vast variety of considerations which come within the sphere of a mother's observation, and to act upon which, constitutes an important part of maternal duty. Especially, we must observe amongst this class, the case of a child endowed with one talent in an extraordinary degree. In all such cases, it gratifies the pride of the teacher, at the same time that

it affords him pleasure, to cultivate such talent to a great extent. But the mother, whose care is for the happiness of her child, rather than its renown, who would not risk its safety for the world's applause, and who looks onward to its ultimate good, rather than to its immediate success—the mother asks with fear and trembling—perhaps she asks with faith and prayer, what moral faculty it will be wisest to cultivate with peculiar attention, so as best to preserve her child from the dangers which beset the path of genius, or of extraordinary talent of any kind. If the talent be for music, the mother will be quick to feel, that an attachment to home, and interest in the fire-side circle there, will be the best preservation which human means afford; and if this talent is displayed in a son, she will be anxious that his sisters shall associate themselves with him in the same pursuit; she will listen, when perhaps it is not convenient to her, to the last piece he has learned; she will even ask him to sing or play, when as a merely selfish gratification it is far from being what she would most desire; and she will bear patiently with his practising even upon the violin, rather than he should feel that he must seek for sympathy among strangers, and an audience away from home.

I have mentioned music, as the talent which

occurred to me as most liable to lead into temptation, but every other natural endowment of a high and distinguished character may be studiously preserved from danger in the same manner as this; and it is only to the mother that we can look for the discharge of this important trust. It is only to the mother that we can look for the general character of her child. Education may be well paid for, lessons may be regular, and teachers highly approved, but when all the different branches of learning have been taught by separate masters, the character of the child will still be demanded at the mother's hand.

But we are told again that a religious education is what the mother wishes to insure, in sending her children to school; and certainly where some of those disadvantages prevail at home, to which allusion has already been made, she does well in placing them under more efficient care, or in circumstances where they will be less exposed to temptation. There are, however, many excellent mothers, whose own care one would suppose likely to be more efficient in this respect, than it is possible for that of any superintendant of a school to be; and here is one of those strange anomalies which often startle us into astonishment at the various contradictions presented by human nature—

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that a pious mother, truly and deeply solicitous for the best interests of her children—a mother to whom religion is indeed the one thing needful, whose early training of her family has been watchful and scrupulous, and whose prayers are offered up with trembling earnestness that no rude wind may blight the blossoms of bright promise already opening in the young minds committed to her care—that such a mother should be willing—nay, anxious to commit her children to the charge of comparative strangers, who must necessarily commence the arduous task of educating them for time and for eternity, without that one great qualification by which she has been especially fitted for the work—without a parent's love.

Nor is this all. The mother knows what characters, and tempers, what habits, conversation, and even what thoughts, engage the attention or occupy the minds of those who meet around her own fireside. She knows in short what elements compose the moral atmosphere of home. They may not all be pure, they may not all be healthy, but still she knows what they are, and how they combine with, oppose, or operate upon, each other. In a school composed of ten, twenty, or fifty children, neither the mother nor any one else can know this, because the very system of school disci-

pline precludes the possibility of that close and long-continued intimacy which prevails in private families; it must therefore be a work of faith, and that of no common order, to believe that the moral atmosphere of schools will contain nothing injurious, or even less than is contained in that of home.

It is a great sacrifice for natural love to make, for that instinctive attachment which is fed by caresses, and which lives in the presence of the beloved object, it is a great sacrifice even for maternal affection to make, when a mother sends away a hopeful and lovely child for months, and years, in the fresh spring-time of its existence, when each day unfolds some opening bud, and each year brings forth some ripening fruit. She would hardly treat her garden in this manner. If she wished it to be as beautiful as care and culture could make it, she would hardly let it out for years, and allow strangers to have all the responsibility of making it what it ought to be, while upon them would be wasted all its sweets. She would hardly give this garden up while all its plants were tender, and required the greatest care; while all its bowers and beds, and pleasant walks, and spots of beauty, were being planned, laid out, and cultivated, only to resume her right to the possession of it, when

all was finished, when the plants had taken deep and lasting root, and the trees had grown to a stately height after the manner of the bending of the early twig. Even in her garden, though workmen might be employed in various departments of cultivation, the mother's *enjoyment* would be to be always on the spot, to take the direction of the whole, to see that the gardeners did their duty; but especially to luxuriate in the perpetual delight which the progress and the beauty of that garden would afford. Truly it is a mystery beyond solution, that a fond mother should prefer sending her children away from home, to pursue their education entirely under the care of strangers!

But the greatest mystery is yet to come. What *is* the religious education of a child? Some persons appear to think it consists entirely in imparting instruction, or storing its memory with religious knowledge; and certainly, as far as knowledge goes, this is a most important part of religious education; but then it is only a *part*. To be educated for a profession, an art, or a business, is to learn to practise it; and above every other profession, it is so with that of religion. It is the custom in some parts of Germany, to have *religion masters* attend young people at certain hours during the progress of their education, and the

religious education of schools must necessarily, to a certain extent, resemble this; while that of home may be adapted to every peculiarity of character, as well as to all those changes in the tone and the temper of the mind, by which young persons are rendered more or less susceptible of impression. How is it, then, that the pious mother can willingly resign those precious moments of familiar intercourse between herself and her child, when the fear of shame is lost sight of in the confidence of love, and it spreads before her—legible perhaps to no other eye—the little tablet of its half-formed thoughts, and asks and hears about the things of heaven? How is it she can bear to think, that when ill or sorrowful, perhaps buffeted by strangers, perhaps unkindly treated by companions rude in thought and act, perhaps guilty, punished, and penitent, it sinks weeping upon its little couch at night, and wonders whether indeed the great God of heaven and earth is really kind;—how can she bear to think that no one comes to lay a fond protecting hand upon its brow, to sing the hymn of peace, or to tell of a blessed Saviour who took little children in his arms, and said that of such was the kingdom of his Father?

Beyond such thoughts, which one would naturally suppose might present themselves with in-

tense interest, and in endless variety, to the mind of the fond mother, there are considerations with regard to the peculiarities of a child, which, if duly considered, would always operate against a system of education carried on at public schools. I mean the peculiar characteristics of children, one requiring a mode of treatment so different from another. As relates to lessons, and mere learning, this is perhaps less necessary to be considered; but as relates to religious education, it is of immense importance, since there are scarcely two human minds so constituted, as to be seriously impressed in exactly the same manner; or we might add, likely to be impressed at the same time; for there is as much in fitness of time for receiving, as in fitness of means for imparting, religious instruction. It is therefore the mother alone, with her faithful watching, her instinctive perceptions, and her fervent zeal for the everlasting welfare of her child, who is fully qualified to use to the best advantage, all the means which a kind Providence has placed in her hands, for the religious education of her children.

With these remarks, and with an assurance to the mothers of England that I have no wish to do more than suggest ideas for their consideration, and by no means would presume either to dictate

or to judge respecting their duties on this important subject, I will close my observations, by quoting, at considerable length, an admirable summary of the advantages to be derived from children being educated under the eye of their parents. These remarks occur in "Home Education," a work which all mothers, who doubt the desirableness of sending their children to school, would do well to peruse; for though they will see, as many have done, that the system of education recommended there, would require advantages of a domestic character, and qualifications on the part of the mother, far beyond what it is the privilege of most families to enjoy, there are admirable passages, and valuable and useful hints, which may be rendered highly serviceable in giving the subject a serious and impartial consideration.

"I wish, then," says the author of "Home Education," after many excellent remarks on the subject, "briefly to point out the probable influence, upon the country, of the prevalence, to some extent, of home education; and what I mean to affirm is this—that, even if schools, and *large* schools, were granted to be generally better adapted to the practical ends of education than private instruction, and that the *majority* of all ranks should receive their mental culture in that mode; nevertheless,

that the welfare of society, on the whole, demands the prevalence, to some considerable extent, of the other method; and that a *portion* of the community—a portion of every rank of the middle and upper classes especially, should come under that very different and more intimate process of culture of which home must be the scene. The school-bred man is of one sort—the home-bred man is of another; and the community has need of both; nor could any measures be much more to be deprecated, nor any tyranny of fashion more to be resisted, than such as should render a public education, from first to last, compulsory and universal.

"It is found, in fact, that a quiet, but firm individuality—a self-originating steadiness of purpose, a thoughtful intensity of sentiment, and a passive power, such as stems the tide of fashion and frivolous opinions, belong, as their characteristics, to home-bred men; and especially to such of this class as are self-taught. Now we affirm, that, whatever may sometimes be the rigidness or the uncompliant sternness of men of this stamp, a serious, and perhaps a fatal damage would be sustained by the community, if entirely deprived of the moral and political element which they bring into the mass. As the social machinery must come to a stand if all possessed so fixed an

individuality as to think and act without regard to the general bias of opinion; so would it acquire too much momentum, if none were distinguished by habits of feeling springing from themselves.

"In schools, and especially in large schools, the two lessons learned by boys—sometimes by two classes of tempers, and often by the same individuals at different stages of their course, are the lesson of domination, and the lesson of abject compliance with tyranny. Even the degree in which, of late, public attention has been directed towards the evils whence so much mischief has been proved to arise, has not availed to alleviate them more than to a very small amount; nor can it be doubted but that the habit of tyrannizing, as well as the habit of yielding servile submission, notwithstanding the correction they may receive on entering upon life, will, more or less, continue to affect the dispositions of men, and must, in a real, if not in a very conspicuous manner, exert an influence over the political temper and movements of the community.

"But a very different class of feeling belongs to young persons educated at home, and who, although perhaps they may not be prompt to contend for the foremost positions in society, are wholly unprepared to cringe before arrogance and oppres-

sion. They have moreover acquired in seclusion that decisive individuality of temper which impels them on all occasions to search for a reason, satisfactory to themselves, before they bow to the dictates of those who have no right to their submission. Moreover, the bosoms of young persons who have been well trained around the gentle influences of the domestic circle, and have lived in the intimacy of intelligent and ingenuous parents, and of other adults, are likely to be fraught with profound and delicate sentiments—with the love of truth, of justice, and of honour; and they are, therefore, equally disinclined either to exercise despotism, or to yield to it. Young men so nurtured under the paternal roof, when, for the first time, they encounter the rude wilfulness, and the selfish violence of vulgar spirits in the open world, may perhaps recoil, and be tempted to leave the field in disgust; but they presently (if not naturally feeble-minded) recover their self-possession, and place their foot firmly in the path where what is just and good is to be maintained against insolent power.

"The substantial liberties of a community involve much more than the bare protection of persons and chattels; for there is a liberty of thought and of speech which may be curtailed, or almost de-

stroyed, in countries that are the loudest in boasting their freedom. There is a liberty, moral and intellectual—the true glory of a people—which consists in, and demands the unrestrained expansion of all faculties, the exercise of all talents, and the spontaneous expression of all diversities of taste, and of all forms of individuality. But this high liberty of mind, forfeited often in the very struggle of nations to secure or to extend political liberty, must assuredly be favoured by whatever cherishes distinctness of character; and it must as certainly be endangered by whatever breaks down individuality, and tends to impose uniformity upon the whole.

"In this view, a systematic Home Education may fairly claim no trivial importance, as a means of sending forth among the school-bred majority, those with whose habits of mind there is mingled a firm and modest sentiment of self-respect—not cynical, but yet unconquerable, resting, as it will, upon the steady basis of personal wisdom and virtue. It is men of this stamp who will be the true conservators of their country's freedom."

CHAP. X.

ON THE TRAINING OF BOYS.

It is scarcely possible to look at the heading of this chapter, without being struck with the wide range of important considerations which it necessarily embraces. The sphere in which man has to act, is not more different from that in which woman finds her appointed duties, than the constitution of the mind of one, is from that of the other. I say nothing here about superiority in one, and inferiority in the other; because I consider that to be an idle question, since nothing can be good, and consequently nothing can be superior, except in proportion as it answers the end for which it was created. There are writers, however, and not a few, in the present day, who maintain that both have equal powers, and are fitted for the same field of action.

Without endeavouring to combat an opinion so opposed at once to nature and religion, to philosophy and common sense, I would just ask, whether women who faithfully perform their duties, have not at present enough to do in their accustomed and familiar place? If mothers, wives, and mistresses of houses, have already enough to do as women, the inference is plain, that in proportion as they assume the duties of men, the nobler sex must be willing to take part in theirs, otherwise there must be a loss of useful exertion in that department where it cannot well be spared. Wishing, therefore, to every man who advocates the ability and fitness of women to take part with men on equal terms in all public affairs, no worse wish, than that he may have a wife a member of parliament, and he himself obliged to stay at home and darn stockings; I will leave this subject with a short, but appropriate passage from Miss Edgeworth, where, in speaking of temper, the author alludes to the appropriate position of woman, in her usually clear and forcible style.

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circumstances should be considered by writers who advise that no difference should be made in the education of the two sexes. We cannot help thinking that their happiness is of more consequence than their speculative rights; and we wish to educate women so that they may be happy in the situations in which they are most likely to be placed."

I repeat, then, that to me nothing appears more obvious, than that the Allwise Disposer of human events, has given to man a widely different range of duty from that which is appointed for woman; and that in order to fit him for his situation, he has been endowed with peculiar capabilities of mind, which it is the important business of the mother to examine and consider, so as to turn to the best account; for it must ever be borne in mind by those who undertake the training of youth, that they have not to *create* materials for character, but to use such as nature has placed in their hands, to the best purpose.

In the first place, why are boys so mischievous, disorderly, and troublesome? Not, certainly, as one might be sometimes almost tempted to suppose, because they are created for the purpose of trying other people's patience; but because they have a superabundance of mental and bodily

energy, which must find exercise in one way or another. Nor would we wish to see them without this energy. The mother who complains of her boys, that they will neither be quiet themselves, nor allow other people to be so, who is perpetually teasing them to sit still, and be good boys, little thinks what she is about; for without this restless and energetic principle in their nature, where would be the man of enterprise, where would be the traveller, the engineer, the statesman, or the philosopher? for there is an earnest perseverance, and an intensity of thought, which requires as much energy to maintain, on the part of the philosopher, as is required on that of the discoverer of a new island in a distant region of the globe.

Nor must we forget that, especially in the present day, there is enterprise required in almost every undertaking to which the energies of man can be directed; and he who in his early years has done little but sit still to be a good boy, would be likely, as our worldly affairs are now conducted, to be left sitting alone, after all his companions had marched onward in pursuit of their different objects of interest or importance. What is necessary then to be done with boys, is to use up their energies, so that nothing shall run to waste; so

that there shall in fact be no overflow into those streams of mischief and disorder, which sometimes threaten to overwhelm and destroy the peace of a whole household.

The mother's care and ingenuity, however, are much needed here. It is not dry lessons, and mere learning, though these are good so far as they go, which constitute the sum total of what is required. These very properly occupy the time and the attention, but they do not satisfy that restless craving for excitement, nor employ that internal stimulus, which are perpetually urging a boy to build up or break down, to help or to hinder, and to please or to vex, as circumstances and the humour of the moment may direct. But why, with all this impetuous desire for action, should not boys be made useful in a family? For my own part, I never could imagine why little girls were to fetch and carry, and to do all the other business of domestic usefulness necessary to fireside comfort, while boys sat still, and fancied themselves into lords of the creation; and I am now convinced it is more the fault of early training, than of any natural peculiarity of their own characters, where the brothers in a family are selfish and unaccommodating towards their sisters. I am convinced that where boys are so rationally

taught as not to regard it as a degradation, there are many occupations in a household by which they may occasionally be made happy and useful at the same time; and as no man ever was the worse for knowing how to use his hands, there would by this mode of training be many a traveller sent forth, many an emigrant, and many a missionary, better qualified than they now are to cope with the difficulties of life, and relieved of much of the annoyance and distress which the usages of different countries are apt at first to occasion.

But the influence of a mother with regard to the training of boys, is so much more important in a moral and religious point of view, than in any other, that I shall confine my observations chiefly to those cases in which a boy is likely to be made better, rather than to those in which he may be made wiser, by his mother. And this, I need hardly repeat, is not to be done by making him sit still. No; there is a great deal more than this to be done, before the mother and her son can pass along the journey of life, a mutual support and comfort to each other; but let the mother do her part with judgment, feeling, and right principle, and she may effectually establish between herself and her son, a relationship of sentiment as well as kindred—a relationship which has nothing in this

world to compare with it, for the tenderness of its associations, the intensity of its interests, and the sacred influence it is calculated to exercise.

Whether we contemplate the character of a beloved and honoured mother, checking by soft yet patient words the wild sports of boyhood, and winning by her gentleness, where it would be impossible to control by mere authority; or whether we look at the aged matron bending on her journey towards the grave, bereft perhaps of every other earthly stay, except the faithful arm of her devoted son; when we see that to him, all full of life and hope and animation as he is, her venerable form is still lovely, simply because it is his mother's; that her voice is still sweet, because it is the same which spoke to him in childhood, calling him back from danger, and luring him into paths of safety when his boyish waywardness might have made shipwreck of his peace; and when we know that her influence is still the same—nay more, because, though trembling, feeble, and dependent as regards the things of time, she is already on the borders of that eternity for which it has been the study of her life to prepare herself, and him—when we see all this so beautifully illustrated, as it is sometimes in the intercourse of the mother and her son, it is with no common

feeling that we breathe the wish, with regard to mothers in general, that they should so estimate and use their capabilities, as to bind themselves by a union so sacred to the interests and affections of their sons.

And after all, boys are not so difficult to deal with as some persons are apt to suppose, provided only a mother is willing to make the necessary sacrifice. Indeed it is a generally acknowledged fact, that where judiciously treated, they are more manageable under female influence, than under any other. In the first place, then, let it be remembered, that boys must be humoured to a certain extent. Both boys and men require this, and they have a right to expect it from women. Some parents appear to think that by the exercise of direct authority, they can prevent their sons seeking unsuitable amusements, and associates not to be approved; but I have no hesitation in saying, that this method of managing boys never did answer the purpose fully, and never will. No; that restless activity which is a part of their nature, and which if rightly directed is one of the most valuable characteristics they possess, must find exercise somewhere; and unless provided with a lawful and sufficient substitute, will recur, perhaps in secret, to the enjoyment of forbidden things. Unless, there-

fore a boy is to some extent humoured, or amused, and made happy in the parlour with his parents, he will be in danger of seeking the excitement and interest which his natural temperament demands, in the kitchen or the stable, if not entirely away from home.

Boys also, are in reality more social, than is sometimes supposed. They are said to do very well if turned out of the room, elbowed off, or made to play by themselves; but it is only because they cannot do better; for no one is more pleased, or more thankful, than an amiable boy, when any kind interest is taken in his occupations and pursuits. No one is more pleased either, when the female part of the family, can be induced to join in these; and the promise of a mother or a sister to let themselves be rowed round an island, or driven in a pony-chaise, is often long remembered by a boy, and prepared for with a kind of natural politeness, which is almost irresistible to the heart of woman, because, unlike much of the politeness of the world, it is at once both flattering and sincere.

It is only by the sacrifice of a little time, and occasionally, it must be confessed, a little patience, that a mother can gain upon her sons in the manner I would so earnestly recommend; and if the love of a mother is not sufficient to help her through

the little difficulties that may arise, she has an abundant reward in the feeling, that by associating herself with boys in their pleasures and amusements, by even studying, to amuse and interest them herself, she is not only cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with their real characters, than could be obtained in any other way; but is in reality rendering herself an object of interest—of delight—nay, almost of beauty to them; since whatever charms and endears, becomes beautiful to the eye of affection.

I repeat, for it cannot be too much impressed upon the minds of women, that both men and boys must be humoured. A mother begins the training of her boys with the unparalleled advantage of natural affection; but beyond this, and as soon as it gives place to thoughts of a more mature and calculating nature, she must begin to charm—she must be absolutely delightful in the opinion of her sons, in order to possess, unbounded influence over them. This, however, we must be sure to bear in mind, is not to be attained by unbounded indulgence; and here lies the great secret of managing boys; for there must be, on the part of the mother, an exercise of the most strict and unyielding authority with regard to all household rules, and indeed with regard to all things of

importance, combined with a certain kind of playfulness, vivacity, and tact, in order, as I have already said, to charm, as well as to influence.

Again; boys are excessively fond of what certain wise people would call nonsense: but what is called nonsense, is not always folly; and there is often much development of character, and much eliciting of good taste and right feeling, in the playful familiarity of a family united in all its members. At all events, the boys, whose ambition it is to share their laughter and their frolic with their mother, will establish for themselves, if she be a right-minded woman, a rule of safety, for which she ought indeed to be most thankful; for the young man who can be trusted in his mirth, neither to go too far, nor choose for it a wrong object, and who is in no danger of being betrayed by excitement into the indulgence of any wrong feeling, may indeed be said to have reaped no trifling advantage from the society of his mother.

Whether young or old, there is something in the nature of man, which is, to a certain extent, repelled by his own sex, and which requires association with the gentler nature of woman. Noisy and boisterous as boys may be, they are not always happy, and not always sufficient of themselves for their own enjoyment. They have their

difficulties, their trials, and their moments of depression; and to whom are they then to go but to their mother? Yet how, if she has never shared their pleasures, is she to be the confidant of their sorrows? No; it is not a little time wasted as she might call it, a little sewing laid aside, a little housekeeping neglected, nor even a party given up, that can, by a right-minded woman, be considered a sacrifice too great to make, in order to obtain the entire and unbounded confidence of her children; and deep and rich is her reward, if by such sacrifices, she can arrive at the blessed certainty that they will conceal nothing from her—not even the confession of their guilt, when they have done wrong. Though all the world should blame them, and though she herself should blame them more than all the world, there ought to be a feeling in the mind of a son towards his mother, that with her severest rebuke will be blended a sympathy more intense than he could find elsewhere.

In those minute and familiar observations which from time to time all persons make upon social and domestic life, one thing has struck me very forcibly, and that is, that in the training of children, we all endeavour too much to put in practice the corrective process, and think too little of the preventive.

Many mothers who are most exemplary in the treatment of their children after they have done wrong, spend comparatively little thought upon how to induce them to do right. To preoccupy the mind with good, and to form the character of children upon right principles, I believe to be the holiest duty of a mother, at the same time that it is the happiest; for though there may often be sweet seasons of endearment after the young heart has been thrown open by convictions of guilt, and softened by penitence, the less frequently such seasons have to occur, the better it is for all parties.

I mention this view of the subject particularly here, because it is more especially with boys, that mothers appear to disregard this early and sacred duty; and when they find they have no influence over them, or think the whole affair of management too troublesome to undertake, they come in time to regard their boys as wholly intractable, and thus give them up, until sent to school, where they hope that, by paying for their education, all will be set right.

It should be remembered too by mothers, that many of their good qualities are not obvious to boys, at the same time that they are keenly alive in their perceptions of others. Amongst the former class may be reckoned those practical

household virtues, of which in after life, and when householders themselves, they form so high a value; but which, while children, they generally esteem no more than they do the accomplishments of nurses, cooks, and washerwomen. Thus, for a mother to be busy with her domestic affairs, goes no way with a boy in engaging his respect, not even to be busy with them to good purpose; because he is necessarily incapable of understanding how much good management, and general good sense, are required, to conduct them properly. The most industrious and laborious mothers are consequently, in their capacity of housekeepers, but little esteemed for this part of their characters by boys; while on the other hand, a woman who acquits herself well in company, who never asks a silly question, nor gives a foolish answer, and whose general abilities and standing in society are such as to enable her to take part in intellectual conversation, and especially if she inspires the respectful attention of influential and clever men, so as to be addressed by them at table, her opinion asked on matters of moment, and, what is more, attended to when given; all this is quickly perceived, and keenly appreciated, by an affectionate boy, who is but too happy to have an opportunity of feeling proud of his mother.

I need hardly, say that, on the other hand, however tender and conciliating the conduct of a mother may be towards her children, if, on public occasions, her sons discover that she has neither the knowledge nor the tact to acquit herself like a woman of sense, the star of her ascendancy will most probably go down, never again to rise to them. It is woman alone, who, having once loved, can still love on, when she has ceased to admire, and when in reality it is painful and humiliating to love. Man is in a great measure incapable of doing this; and when a boy has frequently had to blush and feel ashamed for his mother, his affection may be considered as held by a very slender thread.

Seeing all this so frequently exhibited as we do, in the familiar aspect of our social and domestic affairs, it becomes a matter of astonishment and regret, that mothers should allow themselves to sink into such apparent indifference about their intellectual influence over their children, and especially their sons—that they should allow themselves to settle down into mere household machines, or the automatons of an occasional party, when the temporal and eternal interests of their sons may perhaps be hanging upon the respect which

they inspire in their opening and susceptible minds.

I am aware that many kind-hearted and worthy women, who throw the whole amount of their energies into the means of making their sons and husbands comfortable as regards the body, conscientiously believe they are discharging a duty of paramount importance; and certainly there is no duty, except such as are of a strictly religious character, upon the right discharge of which, so many others are dependent, for without attention to the substantial and bodily comforts of a family, I imagine there would be little good to be expected from intellectual influence. But then we should remember that this duty is only one amongst a many; or rather, only a foundation upon which the superstructure of intellectual influence must rest; and as wisely might we place the solid base of a building at the top, and the light and ornamental architecture beneath; or expose the machinery of a clock to view, and conceal the index plate, as reverse the true order of social economy, so as to make our domestic affairs the most prominent, and neglect those more important matters which belong to the cultivation and right exercise of the immortal mind.

Would that it could be impressed upon the

understanding of every woman, that there is no beauty, and there can be no right order, in that establishment, where the domestic machine does not move quietly, and in a manner unseen. It is true there is no comfort when it stops, or is allowed to fall out of order; but there may be almost as much annoyance where it is always exposed to view, in order that the world may see how admirably it is regulated.

There are many women extremely anxious to have a good dinner placed before their sons and husbands on their returning home, and very properly so; but why are they not equally anxious to set before them an intellectual refreshment! The answer is an obvious one—that they would not relish it so well. Yet again I would ask, may not this be because it is not dressed and arranged with half the skill and care bestowed upon a favourite dish? I appeal not to those who are deficient in education, and certainly not to those who are deficient in natural talent. They must do the best they can, and endeavour to please in some other way; but I do appeal to intellectual and cultivated women, when I implore them to spend a little more time, a little more thought, and a little more pains, in studying how to be intellectually agreeable in their own families, in

order that they may exercise a lasting and beneficial influence over their sons, for without this, I am convinced, although they may be loved as mothers, they never will be esteemed as friends, and still less looked up to as counsellors, whose advice may be appealed to in every season of difficulty or trial.

Nor let the mother confine her views exclusively to her own influence, while endeavouring to inspire her sons with a respect for herself. Having learned at the same time tenderly to love, and profoundly to revere, the character of his mother, a young man will go forth into the world with a higher respect for women in general. Where he does not intimately know the individuals with whom he associates, he will often imagine that he sees the virtues of his mother reflected; and in all his intercourse with society, there will be blended a delicacy of feeling towards the female sex, a regard for their good opinion, a pleasure in the companionship of the most intelligent and amiable, which, next to religion itself, is ever found the surest safeguard for the protection of a young man in his association with the world.

There is no single omen of future life at once so repulsive, and so alarming, as to hear young

men speak as they sometimes do, thinking it spirited and clever, in coarse, vulgar, and disparaging terms of women in general. One cannot help fearing where this is the case, that some want of judgment or want of care must be chargeable upon the mother; and one cannot help turning in idea to those who are but just entering upon their maternal duties, with a fervent hope that they may be more solicitous on this important point, and that nothing may be wanting on their part to inspire a more reverential, and at the same time a more beneficial feeling.

Under the agreeable supposition that a mother has done all in her power to ensure unbounded influence over her sons, we will now inquire in what particular manner this influence is required to operate, so as to correct some of the objectionable tendencies of character in men in general. Perhaps the greatest temptation to which boys are subject, is to use their strength in an unfair or ungenerous manner, in short, to use it so as to take advantage of comparative weakness. The conviction that they have power, when accompanied with a sense of mastery, is unspeakably agreeable both to men and boys. We see this in all the sports of youth, as well as in many of the occupations to which men are by choice addicted.

Even in that of felling trees, and chopping wood, it is surprising the satisfaction they feel in wielding the axe, overcoming resistance, and mastering with wedge and hammer the stubborn nature of the unshapely block. It is the same with almost everything they undertake either in the way of business or amusement; and in the more elaborate affairs of life, to have gained a difficult point, whatever it may be, or however unproductive of personal advantage, seems to carry a reward along with it, to the individual who succeeds, especially where others have failed.

With such a propensity inherent in his nature, it is evident that what is most wanted, is a strong sense of justice, stronger than can be taught in schools, where *might* is too frequently the only acknowledged *right*. But beyond mere justice, there is one consideration closely connected with this subject, which claims the mother's most earnest attention, and which, if properly impressed upon the mind of youth, would help very much to bring about a new and better order of things amongst the affairs of mankind. It is simply this —and I am fully aware that it will not at first sight appear so important as I have been led to consider it upon mature consideration—that a generous and noble nature will never find pleasure

in that amusement, which excites laughter in one of the parties concerned, and pain or suffering in the other.

It may seem but a trifle that a boy should abuse the poor ass by the wayside simply because he can, and dare do so. It may seem but a trifle that he should tease his own dogs, and flog his own pony, because he has the power to do so. It may seem but a trifle that he should torment and ill-treat his sisters, because they have not the strength to defend themselves: but when we think to what all this may grow, it ought to be regarded as one of the surest symptoms of a mean, ungenerous, and tyrannical disposition, which a youth can exhibit; and when we trace it all back to the manner in which he was taught in early childhood, to find his amusement chiefly in those sports which occasioned suffering or death, and over which he was allowed to laugh and exult as much as he liked, we cannot wonder that his character should ultimately prove the very reverse of all that is noble or excellent.

In all such cases, I am aware it is to the mother alone that we can appeal; for men, with some few admirable exceptions, are not quick-sighted or particularly scrupulous on these points. But the mother surely can prevent the poor dog at the fire-

side having its nose and eyes filled with snuff, its tail pinched, and its feet trod upon, to make sport for the young tyrants of the nursery. The mother surely can prevent this, not always by direct authority, for that would make some boys prolong the amusement, for the purpose of showing their power in a twofold manner; and not by entreaty either, for that might possibly excite a laugh almost as exulting as that which is awakened by the sufferings of the tortured animal. From scenes like this, it is too often the fate of woman to turn away distressed, but altogether powerless. But let her not despair, for if ever the preventive system is wanted to operate with all its efficacy, it is here; for let the mind of a boy be preoccupied with a strong impression of the absolute meanness of making sport for himself, out of that which is misery to another, and he will be preserved from much of the cruelty so frequently practised upon animals, and much of what is practised by the strong towards the weak of his own species as well.

I do not say that boys should be sent forth into the world, suffering every moment from that morbid sensibility, which is sufficiently objectionable in girls. No one can admire, more than I do, the manliness which meets every difficulty with un-

abated energy, and the bravery which, when called into action in a good cause, can look at every danger without flinching; and wherever pain has to be inflicted as a necessary evil, no one can admire more than I do the moral courage which can overcome the natural shrinking of a generous and feeling nature, because it is an act of duty or necessity that suffering must be imposed; but to delight in giving pain, to exult in it, to make the inflicting and witnessing of pain a favourite sport—this is entirely a different matter; and this it is, against which I would so earnestly warn the mother to guard her child by that strong principle to which allusion has been made.

It may be said that I am not aware to what this principle would lead, if thoroughly carried out; how it would destroy the amusement of field-sports, and many other of those gentlemanly occupations, the sole pleasure of which consists in taking advantage of the weaker party, so as to occasion either suffering or death. Yet without making it any part of my business to interfere with the game laws, and without wishing in any way to encroach upon the rights and the privileges of country gentlemen, I still maintain that it is inconsistent with a noble and a truly generous nature, to find sport in what occasions unnecessary suffering to any

living creature, however weak, or however insignificant; and I still believe that this principle carried out through all the intercourse of social and domestic life, would do more to refine and elevate the character of man, than any other that we could propose for his consideration.

Nor is it upon the animal creation alone, that this principle would operate so beneficially. The opposite and most frequent one, of the strong taking advantage of the weak, and exulting in the suffering inflicted, and the mastery obtained, may begin with the little boy in the nursery, when he snatches up his sister's kitten, and throws it into the nearest pond; but unfortunately it does not end there, nor possibly until the feelings of woman—the tenderest and deepest she is capable of experiencing—have been made the sport of an idle hour, and in their turn have awakened the merriment which none but the meanest and most cruel of human beings can be supposed to enjoy.

But why should we dwell so long upon this melancholy page of human life—a page whereon is transcribed some of the darkest and saddest records which the history of human affairs presents, when a kind Providence has placed it especially within the range of influence which a judicious

mother exercises over her sons, in a great measure to avert this evil, by laying the firm foundation of an early and earnest love of the opposite good; and in attempting to do this, it is a most encouraging fact, that some of the very same materials of moral character are brought into exercise in both cases. A love of power, for instance, and a sense of mastery—why should not these very principles in the nature of a boy, be so directed as to find an appropriate and delightful use in the feeling that he is the natural protector of his sisters; and that as he gains strength, and advances in influence and importance, it will be one of his noblest prerogatives as a man, to protect the weak in general from the oppression and cruelty of the strong. We see here then, that in the beautiful order of Providence, there is no need to extinguish nature; and that the mother has consequently not so difficult a task before her, as she might at first have been led to suppose.

Boys have either naturally a strong tendency to admire justice in the abstract, or they are so accustomed to appeal to justice in defence of their invaded rights, that they learn at a very early age to value it accordingly. It is in fact the only appeal which a man regards it as consistent with his dignity to make; for where a girl would ask

for mercy, a boy, as if instinctively, demands justice, and nothing more. It is the part of the mother then to keep this idea most sacred and inviolate in the mind of her son, never to allow it to be mixed up with that of expediency, and never to make use of it in reference to what is endured or received, without being equally, or even more scrupulous, in applying it to what is done or granted. There must be no firing up with indignation because the rights of her son are invaded, and looking quietly on when he invades the rights of another. No; her duty extends far beyond this, for she must teach him that it is infinitely better to suffer wrong, than to inflict it; and that no insult endured can so effectually degrade the character of a man, as to be the individual by whom it is offered.

I have thus far touched only upon a few of those points so necessary for the mother to attend to in the early training of her boys, but there comes a time when, if possible, it is more important still that a young man should look to his mother as his best and nearest friend; I mean when he is first entering upon what is called life, and upon the occupations of man. From some peculiarity in the nature of man, there appears to be frequent difficulties arising betwixt fathers and sons about this

period of life, especially if closely associated as members of the same household. One would think, on first looking at the subject, that nothing could be so desirable as for a young man to remain for a long time under the roof of his father; yet in comparatively few instances, is this plan productive of the good desired. Under circumstances of this kind, perhaps more than all others, the mother's care as well as her influence are needed, because no other person can with propriety interfere, and none in fact can have a right to the same degree of intimacy with both parties. But, oh! what judgment, what self-command, what nicety of distinction, what prudence, and what prayer, are needed here! It would seem that little less than supernatural wisdom, and angelic love, could enable a mother and a wife to tread so intricate a path without leaning too much to one side or the other.

Impelled by that intense and fervent love which a mother's heart alone can feel—accustomed to look with firmness and constancy to the simple question of what is right—and, above all, supported by faith and prayer, a mother, even in the trying situation just alluded to, will see clearly that justice must be done to her sons; that the whole of their future interests, both temporal and eternal, may possibly depend upon the exercise of

prudence, in first placing them upon their own foundation; and that an amount of wretchedness, beyond calculation, may be her portion and theirs, if they are not encouraged and helped forward in their temporal affairs.

With these views and feelings, the mother will be solicitous that an early and equitable arrangement should be made with regard to the choice of a profession, or a business, for her sons. And here I cannot but observe with regret, that almost all writers on the subject of education, address themselves exclusively to ladies and gentlemen. We have already admirable hints on "the choice of a profession," but I should like to find some author bold enough to write about the choice and conduct of a trade; for it is to the uprightness and general intelligence of persons occupied in trade, as well as devoted to professions, that we ought to look for the true dignity of our country; and I believe the able and conscientious writer, who should employ his talents in the exposure and correction of abuses in this department, and to the establishment of a new system of moral laws, by which business in general should be conducted upon higher and purer principles than it is at present, would do more for the true interests of his country, than if he added a new continent to

her territory, or even purchased for her the empire of the whole world.

One is apt sometimes to suppose, on looking at the affairs of this world, that men, especially, have two sets of consciences, two kinds of moral laws, and two varieties of religious faith. That they have one conscience for the sanctuary, and another for the desk and the counter, is but too evident; for many, whose sincerity in the hour of worship is not to be doubted, go back to the busy scene of their weekly avocations, to practise—just because other people do the same—what the conscience of the sanctuary would severely condemn. They do this by habit, and in consequence of their having been trained to it by respectable masters, during the time they were clerks or apprentices; they do not see that it can be very wrong, or, at all events, they know that in such practices they are no worse than their neighbours; and if at times the conscience of the sanctuary does visit the office, the warehouse, or the shop, it is only to make them wish, for the moment, that other men of business would agree to give up such practices, and thus make the effort easier and less disadvantageous to them.

After a man is thoroughly embarked in business, conducted upon the customary plan, it would be

difficult indeed, perhaps ruinous to his worldly affairs, for him to make a stand against the generally acknowledged requirements of self-interest. Yet there are not wanting noble and extraordinary instances of Christian men, who have made this sacrifice for the sake of serving more faithfully a heavenly, than an earthly, Master; and others again, who, content with a decent competency, have retired from a scene of contention, in which principle, when opposed to worldly aggrandisement, so seldom gains an entire victory.

It must not be supposed, however, that I am presuming to assail the general integrity of men of business. Far from it; for I believe in this respect our country, to say the least of it, would hold an honoured place in a general comparison of the moral dignity of different nations; but I refer particularly to those *allowed* practices amongst persons engaged in trade, which would not bear to be tested by the moral standard of the gospel; and to that conformity with the customs of the world, which is too seldom brought under the cognizance of the conscience of the sanctuary.

Now, in proportion as it is difficult for the traveller who has long pursued a dubious course, entangled himself with associations, and even learned to adapt himself to the circumstances

around him—in proportion as it is difficult for him to return, and begin his course afresh, it is important that other travellers should be warned by his situation to set out aright; and in proportion as it is difficult for the man of business, thoroughly embarked on the ocean of worldly success, contending with its different currents, and adjusting himself and his affairs to the winds and the tides he meets with there—in proportion as it is difficult for such a man to return, and sail again upon a different course, with new rigging, fresh ballast, and a pilot to whose direction he has not been accustomed—there devolves upon the mothers of England the important and the sacred duty of endeavouring to fit out their sons for a course of action, even if it be in the humblest affairs of business, or the lowest occupations of trade, by which they may exemplify the great principles of justice, integrity, and truth, and thus glorify their Father who is in heaven, while engaged in the common and familiar avocations of earth.

If religion be indeed the one thing needful, and if in the opinion of his parents it bears no comparison in importance with any other, let no young man be sent out to learn a trade or a profession under an irreligious master. It may be said that he goes to such a master to learn his

business only; but does he learn that, and nothing else? or does not the mere fact of his parents having selected such a master, give a sanction to him in associating with such characters when he meets with them in society, as well as in business? If the two subjects admit of a comparison, or if a parent prefers that his son should be made a good engineer, letting his religious interests occupy but a secondary consideration; rather than that he should be a religious man, at the risk of being an inferior engineer, then, indeed, it is a waste of words to dwell upon this point. But even if men are blinded by worldly interest here, as in so many instances it is evident they are, surely pious Christian mothers ought the more to regard it as their especial duty, to make a stand against this fatal and too generally prevailing error. Surely the mother has a right to see that so great an act of mercy, as well as justice, is done to her son. Surely she has a right to see that his eternal interests are not lost sight of in those which belong merely to his success in this world, which are at best but uncertain and transitory, and which bear no relation whatever to the account which both parent and child will have to give at the bar of judgment, where the doom of eternal happiness or misery will be finally decided.

But there is a justice which relates to this world, as well as one which belongs only to the world to come, and this demands the mother's watchfulness and care, to see that her son is preserved as much as possible from what will injure or degrade him as a man. Long continued dependence upon his father, want of occupation, or occupation repugnant to his natural feelings, may do this; and the mother will reap the advantage as regards him, of having impressed upon the mind of her husband, if he did not feel it before, that a father has no more right to withhold from his sons a just and reasonable settlement in life, than he has to deny them, while boys, a place at his own table. It is possible that the father's own affairs may not always afford him the means of establishing his sons with such advantage as they might at one time have expected; but so far as it can be done, it is a sacred duty on the part of parents, worth almost any sacrifice to perform, and which nothing short of absolute inability to pay their own debts can justify them in neglecting.

I mention these subjects more particularly, because fathers are not always aware of the effect of their conduct towards their sons. They forget, in the more absorbing interests of public or private business, what were their own feelings when

young, and they seldom take into account the lowering of the moral character which must ensue, from their sons not being able to assume the position of men at the time of life, when the laws of nature and of reason require that they should in a great measure be masters of their own actions. Neither do they reflect and calculate as women do upon the moral tendency of things in general, or they would see more clearly that nothing can be more injurious to the character of a young man, or more endanger his safety, than for him to be morally degraded, to lose his self-respect, and to feel that he has not the common place and footing of a man, in society; as he inevitably must, by being denied the privileges of a free agent, and the interest which it is necessary for him to enjoy, in order to enter with spirit and energy into the occupations of a rational being.

To imagine a father neglecting this great duty towards his sons, is to look at a picture too melancholy for contemplation—a picture representing a sort of household slavery, in which the sons are bondmen to their father; and it is from such abuses of parental power, wherever they may exist, that we call upon the mothers of the rising generation to rescue their children; in the first place, by endeavouring to inculcate higher views of moral

responsibility in general; and in the next, by exercising their moral courage in so regulating their domestic economy, that the masters of families shall not have to say, they cannot afford to provide for the settlement of their sons.

In pursuing our examination of that most sacred and interesting relationship which subsists between a mother and her sons, the subject assumes so many aspects of importance, that it is difficult to confine it within moderate limits. I will, however, endeavour to draw the chapter to a close, by alluding again to that corrective process, which, however careful parental training may have been, will occasionally, there is too much room to fear, have to be put in practice by the mother; and here she is of all human beings the fittest to be at once the confidant, and the reprover, of her erring sons. She is the fittest, because from her maternal love she is the most disposed to look charitably upon their actions, and to speak kindly even of their faults; and because she must feel more intensely than any other human being can, the importance of the future being marked by a happier experience than the past.

In one respect, however, the best of women are apt to defeat their own ends when appealing to young men on the subject of their misconduct.

From knowing but little of the world, and almost nothing of the temptations to which young men are exposed, they often speak of vice only as it appears to them, without taking into account the various and attractive methods adopted by agents of evil for rendering it at first sight attractive and imposing. They speak of it sometimes as odious and disgusting, when it has perhaps been dressed up so as to appear both lovely and refined, to its victims. They speak of it as hateful, when it has been listened to, uttering in syren tones the language of flattery and love. They speak of it as low, when it has been decked in purple, or has worn a coronet upon its brow; and they speak most justly of its being abhorrent, simply because it *is* evil, when possibly those to whom they address themselves have just learned to believe it is only women, and ill-bred or weak-spirited persons, who think it so. There is a vast machinery of allurement put in operation by the world, which ought to be taken into account, when we speak to young men of the real nature of vice; and it is not until they have proved the falsehood of its promises, and the worse than hollowness of its pretensions, that they can always be made to see the nature of vice as it really is.

I have sometimes thought, in addressing persons

on this subject, and young men in particular, that enough is not said of the *cruelty* of vice. It is true, that according to the method of reasoning already alluded to, it may have appeared to them in the character of conciliation and kindness; but I cannot think there would be much difficulty in showing how it is the nature of all vice to injure, dissever, or destroy. It would not be difficult for a mother, before her own son has learned to sit in the seat of the scorner, to point out to him instances in which the peace of a family is utterly destroyed by the misconduct of a son; and even in the simple fact of his staying out late at night, she might describe a mother's feelings with such pathos, as to make him shrink from the perpetration of such an act of unkindness, even if he regarded it as nothing more.

This, of course, must be in the commencement of a young man's objectionable career. When he has advanced farther in the hardening process, and become proof against such impressions, the mother can only watch and pray for moments of penitence or remorse; and when such occur, then it is that in a conscientious and feeling woman, the perfection and beauty of the female character display themselves; then it is, that the depth and the tenderness of her love is unfolded, that the

floodgates of her sympathy are thrown open, while, with an earnestness which belongs only to the affection of a mother, she pleads with her penitent to return to the ways of wisdom and of peace.

It is then, perhaps, if ever, that, with the Divine blessing upon her efforts, the mother is able to bring home to the mind of her son, a conviction of the necessity of personal religion. He will then have tried the world as it is, followed the bent of his own inclinations, tasted the bitterness of the forbidden fruit, broken over the bounds of his own determination again and again, and proved, beyond all possibility of deception, that he is not sufficient of himself to carry out a single good resolution, or even to escape from misery and degradation. It is then the blessed privilege of the mother at such a time to be able to point to a means of safety, and to lay hold of the previous convictions of her son, to prove that it is the only means.

How many a young man is brought into this situation, who has no kind mother near him to whom he may unburden his heart, it is melancholy to think; and how many at such times, having had recourse to the advice of a spiritual friend, and having formed the best resolutions for the future, for want of the watchful tenderness of a mother, have been harshly dealt with, treated with con-

tempt, and rudely driven back from their new position, by worldly-minded and irreligious men. How many have wept tears of the sincerest penitence upon the comfortless pillow of a cold lodging, where no female voice was heard to speak in words of consolation or of love. How many have risen from such a couch, and gone forth again to mix in the revelry of strangers, and to forget amongst scenes of folly and of vice the impressions of the preceding night, because they had no mother to go home to, and to tell of the suffering, which, untold, was more than they felt it possible to endure.

Having felt for her own sons tenderly as a mother, and deeply as a Christian, we need scarcely add, that in the character of the matron of a family, all young men who are brought within the sphere of her influence, ought to feel, that, to a certain extent, they have a mother. Though each may be nothing to her in his individual capacity, though only an occasional visitor, an assistant in her husband's business, or even an apprentice, the young man of whom she thinks so little is possibly the treasure of some fond mother's heart, perhaps the support of a widow, or the only consolation of a neglected wife, or he may hold a responsible situation as being the oldest of a large family whose welfare may depend upon his conduct in life.

From such an one, separated from his own kindred, can the mistress of a household, who has herself experienced the anxieties of a parent, withhold that Christian care, and that true feminine sympathy, for which the mother of the befriended youth may have to thank her when they meet, to rejoice over their beloved one's welcome in safety to the shores of the "better land?"

It is often said that women are powerless in forming or directing the opinions of men; but when we contemplate the influence of those Spartan mothers, who, by the operation of united and popular feeling, could make it less dreadful to their sons to die, than to return home from an inglorious conflict, we cannot doubt that with Christian women is vested a power as influential, and far more holy, than this. We cannot doubt but that Christian women might so exercise this power, as to inspire in the hearts of their sons, a profound and thrilling sense of patriotism, for instance; and if they could be made to prefer the interests of their country, to the indulgence of mere personal gratification, might not the same influence be extended to the religious interests of mankind in general?

It is too much the tendency of men, when they purpose to do good, to confine their attention to

the pulling down of evil, to battling with opposition, and correcting abuses by the strong arm; until one would almost think their religion was a system of hostility, and nothing more. It is the part of woman, however, and one of her holiest duties, to endeavour to smooth the asperities of man's nature; and when he comes to her with his fierce party-feelings, his strong prejudices, and his irritated feelings, even against what is wrong, it is the duty of a Christian mother, towards all over whom her influence extends, to point to remoter objects of consideration, so as to lead away from the mere affairs of the moment, to those lasting, true, and unvarying principles which constitute the essential part of a religion truly described as one of peace and love.

Thus by a steady and persevering direction of the minds of young men to principles, rather than to individuals—and, above all, to religion rather than to politics; and by throwing over the whole of her intercourse with the other sex the harmony and beauty of Christian love,—I believe that any mother may establish for herself a sphere of influence, both within and beyond her own immediate family, by which the whole human race, and man in particular, will be benefited beyond the power of human calculation.

CHAP. XI.

ON THE TRAINING OF GIRLS.

THE most striking characteristic of girls, as intellectually and morally distinguished from boys, is a quickness of susceptibility, and a consequent versatility of character, which may be either a defect or otherwise, according to the early training to which they are subjected.

It is sometimes spoken of as a defect in women, that they have less power of abstraction than men; and certainly if they were required to take part in all the occupations of the other sex, it would be so; but for my own part, I must confess, I never could see it an advantage to any woman, to be capable of abstraction beyond a certain extent. It may be all very well for a man of science now and then to boil a watch instead of an egg for breakfast; but a woman, I would humbly suggest, has no business to be so far absorbed in any purely intellectual

pursuit, as not to know when water is boiling over on the fire.

That susceptibility of feeling, then, which belongs peculiarly to woman, and which renders her liable to a far greater number and variety of impressions than man, that liveliness of interest in all that is passing around her, and that versatility of character by which she so easily adapts herself to every variety of circumstance and situation, are, in reality, the natural peculiarities upon which depend much of the happiness she imparts to others, as well as much of what she herself enjoys. There is, however, considerable danger, lest these peculiarities or propensities of her nature, indulged to a great extent, should dwindle into absolute nothingness; just as the lights and shadows of a picture broken up and divided into minute portions destroy the effect of the whole.

The aim of a mother in the training of her daughters should consequently be, to strengthen their characters, and to fix them on a firm and solid foundation, so that their feelings may branch out and develop themselves in endless variety, without depriving the root of its necessary firmness and strength. One part of the process by which girls may be strengthened both in mind and body, consists in allowing them sufficient exercise in the

open air; nay, even in inducing them to take advantage of it, for there is a musing listless tendency in some young girls, which ought by all means to be counteracted, and nothing is so effectual in doing this, as the stimulus of healthy and playful exercise. Those women who have known what it was in their childhood to enter into the true spirit and luxury of wild romping, are I believe always the most energetic when called upon to act in affairs of importance; while the musing, quiet, listless little girl, though possibly she may in her early life be more gentle and ladylike than the other, seldom grows up to be so useful and valuable a character.

The artificial habits of the present day, the over-taxing of every means of keeping well with the world in external things, and the over-straining of talent and ability of every kind in the attainment of what is merely ornamental and superficial, have the worst possible effect upon the bodily as well as the mental health of woman; and as one is so intimately connected with the other, it is one of the most important duties of a mother, to aim at the preservation of her daughters from that host of nervous maladies which effectually destroy the happiness, and prevent the usefulness, of so many ladies in the present day.

I believe it is generally allowed that fresh air and exercise restore the general tone of the constitution after it has become weakened, more effectually than any of those medicines of whose infallibility we hear so much; and when we think how much more the mind and the animal spirits are benefited by the former, than the latter prescription, it becomes a matter of astonishment that mothers should not prefer spending the same amount of money in procuring these rather than the other. It is indeed a matter of astonishment, that girls should be so frequently cooped up in close rooms, scarcely permitted to breathe or walk lest the air should be impregnated with damp, or the ground a little moistened by some passing shower; that they should be forbidden to run, lest they should heat themselves, and thus bring on a delicacy of the chest; should be dressed in such a manner that they have to bear perpetually in mind the spoiling of their clothes; while the little remaining strength they have is supposed to be kept up by patent pills, and tonics of every description. If girls thus trained are to become English wives, and mothers, we have certainly not much to expect in the future prosperity of our country, except so far as relates to the department of medicine.

And here I would observe, in connection with the spoiling of clothes, that one of the most frequent causes of dispute and dissatisfaction in private families, arises out of the habit, so prevalent in the present day, of living in a style beyond our circumstances to maintain; or perhaps, more properly, to the utmost extent of what we can afford. It may seem but a trifling thing to mention amongst the many serious subjects which occupy our attention in connection with maternal duty; but since the happiness of domestic life is in a great measure made up of little things, I cannot think it out of place to remind the mistresses of families in the middle ranks of life, how much disturbance of temper and distress of mind they subject themselves to, by the habit of having more costly furniture and clothing than they can afford; how often mothers have to check the healthy sports of their children, lest china should be broken, carpets soiled, or dresses rendered unfit for their next exhibition in public; and how often, when an accident has happened, when a costly vase has been demolished, a necklace broken, or a velvet coat destroyed, harsh words have been interchanged by the parties implicated, and reproaches rendered a hundred-fold more bitter, from the secret consciousness of the difficulty with which such wasted

money in the first instance was spared, and the still greater difficulty with which such loss will be restored.

False ideas of happiness I believe to be at the root of half our miseries; and when we think of the vast amount of natural and healthy enjoyment of which children are deprived, in order that they may dress and live genteelly, and of the real suffering they are made to endure, when their buoyant spirits have led them into forgetfulness of the requirements of this gentility; when we think of the sufferings of the mother, too, when she has to tell her care-worn husband, on his return home from a business which is perhaps not covering his expenses, that some two, or ten, or twenty guineas have been wasted by a single fall; when he turns upon her with reproaches for having coveted so costly and unsuitable a treasure; and she retorts upon him again, for an equal amount of money wasted in some other way — when the evening closes with tears on one side, and declarations on the other, that things cannot long go on in this manner, that he must fail, and be sold up, and sent to prison—when such scenes so frequently take place, as we all know they do, from the simple fact of people living habitually beyond their means, an expensive establishment ought to be a source

of happiness indeed, to be weighed in the balance against the misery of a single evening spent like this.

It is then to the moral courage of women, and of mothers especially, that we must look for bringing about a better order of things in this respect; for training up their daughters in the first place to be more healthy, in order that they may have stronger nerves, and consequently minds less susceptible of unnecessary suffering. With all the enjoyments of which woman is capable, and we ought thankfully to acknowledge that they are many, she is yet subject to much in this world of an opposite nature—to quite sufficient for her strength and patience, without having superadded those extraneous miseries which arise out of the present artificial state of society. She has enough to do to adapt herself cheerfully to her lot whatever it may be, to bear without complaining the trials of a constitution always more or less subject to infirmity, to meet with equal mind the different peculiarities of temper and disposition by which she is surrounded, to console others when herself in distress, to support when depressed and feeble, to soothe when smarting under annoyance, to cheer when cast down, and to inspire hope when despairing—with these, and the thousand other

offices of kindness and consideration which it is woman's sacred duty to perform, she has enough to do and to suffer, without being subjected to a host of enemies in that long catalogue of nervous maladies which at once assail the body and the mind.

"If I had been well, I could have borne it," is the frequent and pitiable expression of woman, when she tells of her calamities; and certain it is, that with bodily health she is capable both of acting and enduring to an extent, which on many occasions deserves the name of heroism; while from habitual bodily weakness, and all the personal indulgence it induces, the attention to little things, the interest centred in self, and the constant occupation of mind by the trifling exigencies of the moment, she has, though possessing perhaps the best intentions and feelings, but very little power of rendering herself useful to her fellow-creatures.

I speak not of impossibilities, when I urge this subject upon the attention of mothers. I know that woman is naturally and necessarily weak in comparison with man; and that her lot has been appointed thus by Him who alone knows what is best for us; but I would ask for her, in common kindness, that she should not be rendered weaker

than is necessary by an education artificial, unhealthy, and unnatural. I would ask for her a fresh, pure, and invigorating atmosphere, in which she may breathe with freedom, free exercise for her limbs, and occasionally the indulgence of that wild excitement, that thrilling ecstasy, and that unbounded exhilaration of mind and body, which a free and joyous life in the country can best afford. With the same object in view, the general strengthening of their characters, I would earnestly recommend that girls should often be associated with their brothers in their sports, that they should climb with them the craggy rock, penetrate the forest, and ramble over hill and dale, avoiding only those amusements which to one party produce enjoyment, but to the other torture or death. From these, girls should be most scrupulously preserved, for there is cruelty enough existing in the world, from the absence of all thought about it in men; but if women lose the fine edge of their feelings on subjects of this nature, they lose the most beautiful of those characteristics which render them scarcely less lovely, than they are worthy to be admired.

In the study of botany, geology, and many other pursuits of more lasting interest than those which afford amusement only, girls may very properly be

associated with their brothers; and happily for woman, in all that belongs to an intense admiration of the beautiful, both in nature and art, she stands at least on an equality with man. Many of these pursuits are carried on with the greatest advantage in the country; and if only for a short portion of every year it is possible for parents to indulge their children with country exercise and air, I believe it may be rendered of lasting and incalculable benefit, by the feelings it will afford them an opportunity of experiencing, and the ideas they will by this means acquire.

What has been said of public schools, with regard to the education of children in general, is most especially applicable to that of girls. More liable than boys to receive impressions from surrounding things, more easily diverted from a straightforward course, less fortified by moral courage, and consequently more tempted to have recourse to artifice, if not to falsehood, in order to escape what they dread, they are at once more exposed to injury, and less capable of withstanding it; while many of the reasons which operate powerfully in favour of sending boys to school, have no relation whatever to the formation of the female character. Besides which, the education of a woman, if it be worth anything, should be one which would fit her

for filling the place and discharging the duties of a woman; and until some new system of school-education shall be adopted, by which girls may be progressively initiated into what will constitute the business of their future lives, the advantages of sending them away from home must be of a very questionable nature, except in the instances already alluded to, where family associations are likely to be injurious.

In support of my own strong feelings on the subject of sending girls to school, I cannot resist the temptation of quoting again from the pages of "Home Education," where the author observes, that "Girls should be educated at home, with a constant recollection that their brothers, and the future companions of their lives, are at the same time at school, making certain acquisitions indeed, —dipping into the Greek drama, and the like— but receiving a very partial training of the mind, in the best sense, or perhaps only such a training as chance may direct; and that they will return to their homes, wanting in genuine sentiments, and in the refinement of the heart. Girls, well taught at home, may tacitly compel their brothers to feel, if not to confess, when they return from school, that, although they may have gone some way beyond their sisters in mere scholarship, or in

mathematical proficiency, they are actually inferior to them in variety of information, in correctness of taste, and in general maturity of understanding; as well as in propriety of conduct, self-government, in steadiness and elevation of principle, and in force and depth of feeling. With young men of ingenuous tempers, this consciousness of their sisters' superiority, in points which every day they will be more willing to deem important, may be turned to the best account, under a discreet parental guidance, and may become the means of the most beneficial reaction in their moral sentiments.

"Parents, therefore, in the education of their daughters at home, will do well to keep in view this double intention, in the course they are pursuing; and while bestowing their cares immediately upon these, recollect that they will have an influence to exert hereafter, such as will make itself felt far beyond its immediate circle."

In proportion as girls are more liable than boys to receive impressions, and imbibe notions, from those with whom they associate, they derive more benefit from pursuing their studies beneath the care of kind and judicious parents. For that part of education which belongs to the mere acquisition of learning, there are teachers easily to be had; while for that far greater portion which belongs to

the formation of character, the mother, where her own example and influence are good, is of all human beings the best fitted. In cultivating a taste for what is refined and beautiful, in the acquisition of general knowledge, as well as in that of easy and agreeable manners, in conversation at once intelligent and unobtrusive, in the practical part of female duty, and in all those graces of mind and person which most embellish the female character, it is impossible to imagine a young girl more advantageously situated than in a well-regulated home, and surrounded by an amiable and well-informed family, where occasional reading aloud from well-selected books, lively instructive conversation, and easy and faithful narrative, constitute the fireside amusements of a social circle. In the midst of such a family, with a mother who can teach her all the beauty of household accomplishments, without any of their vulgarity, a young girl may indeed be said to be fitting herself for a useful and agreeable woman; and the nearer the education of schools can be made to resemble this, the more likely they will be to make young women all which the companions of their future lives would desire.

But how is it so many mothers of domestic habits themselves, complain that their daughters

cannot be made to attend to household concerns? and how is it that so many young ladies who do not deny that domestic attention is a duty in woman, still reject with contempt the idea of making themselves useful? Much of this truly culpable absurdity we know to arise out of false notions of refinement, and out of that universal prevalence in the present day, of an anxiety, in the middle classes of society, to adopt the habits of the higher; yet I cannot but suspect, that another secret lies at the root of this evil, which mothers in general appear not to have dreamed of in their philosophy. I allude to the little care which is taken to render the performance of household duties attractive to young people.

There is no reason, that I can imagine, why household duties should not be attractive; why a mother and her daughters, associated for a few hours in the laundry, or even in the kitchen, should not enjoy conversation as pleasant, as when seated in the most elegant drawing-room; nay, rather, I believe the brisk healthy exercise, the natural satisfaction of despatching business, and the pleasant idea of being useful, are calculated, when combined in this manner, and when enjoyed with congenial companions, to do good both to the bodily health, and the animal spirits; and I would

strongly urge upon all mothers to make the experiment, who are afflicted with discontented, oversensitive, and morbidly miserable daughters.

But how is it, we ask again, that young ladies have such an unconquerable repugnance to this kind of occupation? Shall I be pardoned if I suggest, that many of them have never seen their mothers happy, some have never seen them reasonable, and others still have never seen them good-humoured, while engaged in their domestic duties. There is such a thing as toiling on from morning till night, and yet making nobody comfortable,—dusting, washing, brushing, and cleaning, and yet making nobody comfortable,—cooking, broiling, stewing, and steaming, and yet making nobody comfortable,—concocting good things, and yet making nobody comfortable,—laying down carpets, fitting up rooms, stuffing out pillows, smoothing down beds, and yet making nobody comfortable. No; it is this perpetual hurrying, scolding, and grumbling, this absence of peace, and absence of pleasure, which disgusts and deters young women from plunging into a vortex, where the loss of all comfort appears inevitable; and when we look at the anxious expression of these house-devoted slaves, when we hear their weary step, and above all their constant complain-

ings of servants and work-people, when we see how entirely their life is one of tumult and confusion, excluding all calm or intellectual enjoyments, we cannot wonder that young women with any right feeling, or any taste for refinement, should be effectually repelled from all sympathy or association with their mother's pursuits.

It would be well sometimes, if one might venture on so bold a question, to ask such tumultuous housekeepers, what it is they are really aiming at in the world of bustle and turmoil which they create? I believe many of them would answer with the most perfect sincerity, that their aim was to make everybody comfortable. Alas! that so vast an amount of labour should ever be undertaken to so little purpose! If they could only be induced to withdraw themselves from the scene of action for a few days, or rather be prevailed upon to sit still, look on, and take no part in the domestic proceedings, I imagine they would be a little surprised to see how incomparably more comfortable everybody would be without their interference, than with it.

Comfort, they would then learn, is not to be purchased by the loss of peace. No; there must be system, there must be order, there must be a well-regulated, as well as a busy household,

before the individuals who compose it can be made happy; and therefore it needs both good sense and refinement, both a well-managed temper and a cultivated mind, for the mistress of a house to conduct her domestic affairs in such a manner, as to render the scene of her practical duties in this department one of attraction to her daughters.

Unless a mother is willing and able to associate herself in such pursuits with her daughters, she had almost better allow them to grow up in ignorance of domestic duties altogether; for such is the danger of young girls associating exclusively with servants, that the benefits derived from a little extra skill in this department, would be purchased at too great a risk. We cannot too carefully preserve young women from all that may endanger a loss of their delicacy and refinement; and if they cannot be domestic without being vulgar, it is a proof that they have not been trained in the right manner to the discharge of their duties, for I am convinced there is nothing in the practical part of domestic economy, necessarily vulgar in itself.

In these, as well as in so many of the duties of women, it is the motive which dignifies the act; and when all unsuitable conversation is avoided, when the reason why everything is done is ration-

ally and cheerfully explained; when, instead of the ignorant or clumsy method in which servants are accustomed to conduct their household affairs, the mother instructs her daughters how to do every thing with good sense, expertness, and scrupulous nicety; when she enlivens her method of instruction with amusing and well-told anecdotes, or points out the relations of cause and effect in a more philosophical point of view; when she shows how a little deviation from this plan or the other will annoy or occasion inconvenience to others; and how the bestowment of a little more pains, will increase materially the comfort of some members of the family, if not of all; when she pictures the satisfaction exhibited by some well-known countenance, and describes in anticipation the delight of affectionate surprise—when she thus throws a sentiment and a moral into all that is done, we profane one of the most sacred of maternal duties, by calling it either vulgar, or unworthy of our regard.

In the choice of books to be read for the instruction or amusement of her daughters, a mother should be always consulted. A novel read in secret is a dangerous thing; but there are many works of taste and fancy, which, when accompanied by the remarks of a feeling and judi-

cious mother, may be rendered improving to the mind, and beneficial to the character altogether; nor is it possible to imagine a scene of much greater enjoyment, than is presented by a thoroughly united and intelligent family, the female members of which are busily at work, while a father or brother reads aloud to them some interesting book approved by the mother, and delighted in by her daughters.

In all the intimacies of friendship, and especially in those lengthy and numerous correspondencies into which young women are apt to enter with more feeling than prudence, the mother ought to feel assured that her approbation will be sought for, and that nothing will be really enjoyed, not even the closest and most interesting friendship, in which she does not to some extent participate. It is true she cannot *force* herself into these intimacies, and ought not to assert a claim to do so; but her whole conduct and behaviour towards her daughters, should be such as to inspire a feeling in their hearts, that no enjoyment is complete without her sharing it, or at least giving it her entire sanction. Indeed, without this degree of confidence, which must be voluntary on the part of the young, how is it possible that a mother can really know the whole heart of her daughters, and without such

knowledge, she can exercise but little influence over their moral character.

It is not the manner in which a young woman conducts herself in company, which betrays what is at work in those chambers of imagery, where the imagination and the feelings of youth are apt to dwell; and often those characters which appear in general society the most hidden, and the most reserved, are struggling hard with under-currents of tumultuous feelings, of which the world has little knowledge or suspicion. But the mother ought not to be strange, like the world, to these operations, which go on in connection as it were with a sort of inner life, and which constitute in reality, the whole happiness or misery of the individual to whom they belong. With this second life, so often hid in the bosom of her child, the mother ought to live; for here will commence the first awakening of those deep affections, which lie at the foundation of the whole moral being of woman.

The mother should enjoy the entire and unreserved confidence of her daughters, in all those little affairs of personal calculation which so often gratify the vanity, at the same time that they disturb the peace, of woman; for just in proportion as her feelings are liable to excitement, and quick

to receive impressions; in proportion as her happiness depends upon others, upon preserving their approbation, or gaining their favour, she is subject to an endless variety of anticipations and regrets, of hopes and disappointments, of joys and of sorrows, to which man is a stranger, and which, from the different elements these varied sensations bring into operation, often render the whole character feeble and valueless, though at the same time it may be composed of little but what is amiable and agreeable in itself.

To prevent their daughters learning to live upon the excitement of the moment, leaning too much upon others for support, seeking too eagerly for approbation or praise, calculating too seriously upon the flattery and attentions they receive, and in short building their happiness too much upon the gratification of their vanity, ought to be the great aim of the mothers of England; for to grow up with an idea of the supreme desirableness of attracting attention, is a mistake as pitiable as absurd. Yet it is one to which girls of quick feelings are particularly liable; and even where the attractions of beauty are wanting, the power of riveting attention by amusing anecdote, of exciting applause by the display of accomplishments, or of making themselves conspicuous in almost any

other way—in short, of doing any thing to escape the mortification of being overlooked or neglected, are amongst the most frequent temptations from which a mother ought, by all possible means, to preserve her daughters.

It is often the case with women, that a rapid and acute discrimination, a turn for drollery, and a quick perception of the ridiculous, degenerate into uncharitable satire, and a desire to excite laughter at the expense of kind feeling. And here, as well as in all other instances of feminine weakness, the preventive process is that to which we look with the greatest confidence of success; for, with a character previously fortified by a strong sense of justice, this temptation will be less likely to gain the mastery; and where the mind is preoccupied with what is more important, the littleness of personal vanity will be less likely to lead astray.

One of the greatest difficulties in attempting to correct the faults of woman, is that so many of them are such as "lean to virtue's side,"—that they are in fact mismanaged or ill-directed peculiarities of character which could not have been destroyed, but by the extinction of her individuality. If ever then the care of a judicious mother is wanted, it is in the opening feelings of a young girl, when

branches of the tenderest growth have to be cherished and directed, rather than checked and lopped off. We would not have, for instance, a race of women unsusceptible of praise and blame, reckless of personal attraction, and, above all, insensible to the enjoyment of being beloved. Any mode of training that would deprive woman of her natural feelings, would deprive her of the capability which she holds as her most sacred trust, of being a blessing to her fellow-creatures, and especially to man.

But, blessed be God! there is a foundation upon which the character of woman may safely rest, and which denies not to her the exercise of those peculiar feelings with which she has been endowed, in order that she may with more facility fulfil her divine mission upon earth. It is the religion of Christ Jesus—a religion which binds by gratitude and love: and are not gratitude and love two of the great elements of her spiritual existence? It is a religion which invites her to believe and trust: and is it not her nature to do both? It is a religion which proposes to her a firm support upon which she may lean with safety: and is she not painfully conscious of being insufficient of herself? It is a religion which offers her the shadow of a mighty rock in a weary land: and

is she not a pilgrim faint and feeble, and often wounded and distressed? It is a religion which requires her to visit the fatherless and the widow: and is it not consistent with her natural sympathies to do this? Finally, it is a religion which appeals to her affections, which asks her both to labour and to love, to bear and to forbear, to do and to suffer, for the sake of One who first loved her, and who suffered for her sake: and can there be to woman a more sacred, a more tender, or a more powerful appeal? No; philosophy is not congenial to her nature. It is wholly insufficient to supply her wants, and mere philosophy has ever made shipwreck and ruin of her happiness; but in proportion as she is capable of enjoying and of suffering, and that is to an extent which exceeds all calculation, the religion of the Bible is indeed a revelation of good-tidings to her, opening to her a well-spring of everlasting peace, by which she may sit down in safety, and forget what a scene of suffering this world would be to her, if deprived of the blessed hope which points her affections to another.

This firm foundation of religious faith, it is then the sacred duty of the mother to endeavour, with the Divine blessing, to make the basis of her daughter's moral character: but here again we

must remember, that the same peculiarities will appear; for though, by the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit, the heart may be changed in all that relates immediately to everlasting salvation, it is much to be regretted, that a carelessness on some points of moral interest should creep in, perhaps unawares, and blend itself with the life and conduct of some otherwise excellent persons, so as greatly to injure the cause, which they probably feel, at times, as if they would be willing to die to serve.

The influence of fashion has a great deal to do with forming the habits of women; because, from their natural desire to please, and to excite admiration, they are but ill prepared to be, or to appear, what the society with which they associate, and which constitutes the world to them, does not commend and approve. Hence, so long as their religious duties fall in with the customs and opinions of this world, they go smoothly on; and many (alas! too many,) go little farther; but when conscience makes the discovery, that the ways even of this little select and reputable world are not exactly right, or rather are not right for them; when, from their peculiar circumstances, they are under a moral obligation to do what this little world never does—what the friends with whom they associate, and who attend the same place of

worship with themselves, never do; then comes the struggle, and then most especially do women need the support of moral courage, and of that strong foundation of moral character in general, which can best be laid in childhood, and while under the care of a kind and judicious mother.

To learn willingly and promptly to do whatever is right, simply because it is so, is a great acquisition to any one; but it is most especially so to women, because the first and most natural enquiry with them, when called upon to act in a way different from the common and approved routine of life, is, "What will such and such persons say?" "How grieved such an one will be!" or "How shocked such another!" and so on, until the very basis of moral conduct comes to be lost sight of, in the consequences which are likely to accrue in a social and worldly point of view.

If I might, without being accused of partiality, venture to speak of the females of one religious body as peculiarly exemplifying my meaning, I should point to the Society of Friends, whose private lives afford so beautiful an illustration of looking directly to the abstract right and wrong of every action they perform. It is true, even these women are often diverted from the main point, by little calculations about hems, and

fringes, because great importance is attached to these outward tests by the Society to which they belong; but the habit which is with many of them conscientiously cultivated from early childhood, of simply regarding the right and wrong of every question, and, above all, that of promptly doing the right thing without regard to consequences, believing that only a just or an upright motive is required in the act, to render it acceptable in the Divine sight, and leaving the results entirely with Him who seeth not as man seeth—these habits, cultivated from earliest childhood, and brought into operation in support of truth, integrity, benevolence, and right feeling of every kind, have rendered the female portion of the Society of Friends peculiarly exempt from the weaknesses and the temptations to which allusion has just been made; and if it were possible for the world in general to be made acquainted with their hidden virtues—perhaps more virtuous because they *are* hidden—I believe there would be found much amongst them, that would encourage the mothers of England to educate their daughters upon a system, which, while it detracts nothing from the loveliness and the gentleness of female character, places it upon a firmer foundation as regards strong principle, and moral feeling.

The love of a mother, and the beneficial influence she is so capable of exercising over her daughters, ought not to be too much confined to their early years. As they advance in life, this love assumes more of the character of friendship, and is sometimes rendered the most interesting and delightful which can be enjoyed on earth. In the attachments, occupations, and amusements of her daughters, the mother often lives over again the happy days of her own fresh and buoyant youth. Enclosed, as it were, in the home-garden with her daughters, she gradually retires from those active occupations which may in some measure have wasted her early strength; and knowing that nothing can be learned well, which is not practically learned, she sits in privileged comfort, and looks on, while younger and more active performers carry on the operations of domestic duty. She has then the happy consciousness that her daughters really know what belongs to the business of a household, before they are required to carry it on with no mother to direct; and she can point out in what they have succeeded, or in what they might have done better, before they are exposed to the less gentle criticism of comparative strangers.

In their intercourse with society she is also ever

near. By rendering her companionship one of their greatest enjoyments, they learn to esteem it a privilege to have her with them in all their visits, both of duty and enjoyment; and she thus has an opportunity of watching every look, and hearing every word; and it may be, of knowing that all are regulated by that good taste and right feeling, which it has been her constant endeavour to cultivate. Above all, she will have an opportunity of observing, by what behaviour their intercourse with the other sex is marked. Girls may be very judicious, and very correct amongst themselves, and yet very silly when they receive for the first time the flattering attentions of men. How sad it is, then, for a young woman to expose herself to the ridicule of those who know more of the world than she does, and who consequently are better acquainted with the extreme worthlessness of those common-place civilities, which none but the vain or the ignorant can misconstrue into personal compliments.

If ever, in the course of female experience, a mother's protection and advice are necessary, it is at such times; for to witness the foolish practising of ungenerous men upon the credulity of young girls, is as painful as it is humiliating—humiliating to think that the nature of woman

should be such as to allow her to believe what is so palpably absurd, and often so grossly insincere; and painful that the weak should thus be taken advantage of by the strong. It is, in fact, a most unfair and cruel trial, to which young girls are subjected on their first entering into society. Warm-hearted, credulous, and perhaps a little vain, the kind attentions of men excite their gratitude, for they seem to set them more at ease with themselves, and to take off the edge of that painful susceptibility, which makes them feel as if they were less interesting and attractive than any one else, at the same time that they experience a secret and craving desire to be more so. The kind attentions of men are then most gratifying; they begin, while receiving them, to feel that they are not neglected—perhaps they begin to hope that they may be in some slight degree attractive; and if the affair ended here, there would be no great amount of harm to lament; but unfortunately an ungenerous man cares little about the mischief he is doing, and just by way of amusing himself—perhaps by way of ascertaining how foolish a young girl can make herself—he follows up his attentions, which at first were really kind, by a system of flattery so direct, and by attentions so pointed, that the unsophisticated child of nature, over

whose ignorance he triumphs, becomes a laughing-stock to her companions, and, more than all, to him.

To imagine a poor girl thus circumstanced, without a mother to watch over her, is melancholy indeed: but what shall we say where the mother is a party concerned in this folly; and where, with worse than folly on her part, she hails the flattering prospect of her daughters becoming distinguished in society, as an omen of their speedy and advantageous settlement in life? It is impossible to express in language strong enough for the occasion, the disgust—nay, the perfect horror—which this manœuvring on the part of mothers naturally excites; and the wonder is, that they do not in all instances—as no doubt they do in a great many—defeat their own ends. The wonder is, that women possessed of even a moderate portion of common sense, cannot see how repulsive it must be to men, to meet in society with young ladies whose parents are anxious to get them off; for how is it possible to suppose, that those girls who are so little wanted or so little valued in their natural homes, could be any desirable acquisition to the home of a husband? On the other hand, the more carefully a young girl is guarded at home, the more tenderly she is cherished, the more highly she is valued, and

the greater the sacrifice it would be to her parents to part with her, the more room there is to hope, that she is really estimable in herself, and calculated to bring a dowry of happiness, as her marriage portion, to the husband of her choice.

If there be one trust more sacred than another to the heart of a mother, it is the delicacy and the purity of her daughters; to shield them from all exposure to unkind remarks, by the most scrupulous care as regards their dress and manners; to keep them from intercourse with those whose feelings are not finely strung, and whose minds are not enlightened or refined; and to preserve them from the sad consequences to woman, of even the slightest deviation from the strict line of propriety in habits and conversation; these are amongst the sacred duties of a mother, and they are such as no other person can so well perform.

As the love and the care of a mother for her own sons, and the feelings of anxiety which they awaken, naturally lead her to feel a greater interest in young men in general, and especially in those who are placed within the sphere of her influence; so the same feelings on the part of a mother towards her daughters, extend themselves with a kind and matronly protection to all the young females with whom she is brought into

intimate association; and knowing what a deep well-spring of affection there is within her own breast, and how much she is capable of doing and suffering for her own children, if she be a kind and generous-hearted woman, she will sympathize in proportion with those young women, who may be separated from their own families, and deprived of a mother's tenderness and care; but especially she will sympathize with the motherless.

And here I must beg to call the attention of the mothers of England to one particular class of women, whose rights and whose sufferings ought to occupy, more than they do, the attention of benevolent Christians. I allude to governesses, and I believe that in this class, taken as a whole, is to be found more refinement of mind, and consequently more susceptibility of feeling, than in any other. That they should be refined, at least to a certain extent, well brought up, and well educated, are amongst their necessary qualifications for the office of governess in private families of respectability; and the more cultivation of mind they can throw into the scale of merit, the more delicate, the more accomplished, and the more highly embellished their characters are in every respect, the more they are esteemed in the line of their profession. But is there not another contin-

gent hanging upon the question of qualification?—Are they not in the same proportion liable to suffering?

"But we treat them so well," say the mothers of England. "We make them exactly like members of our own families; and that is more than can always be expected by young women who have to *go out*." Here then lies the mischief. It is the habit we have of speaking and thinking of "*going out*" as a degradation, which creates more than half the misery with which it is associated. And why should it be considered a degradation, when the duty of educating the young is universally acknowledged to be the most important which can devolve upon any human being, at the same time that it requires the highest mental attainments. We all know this; and we all know that the governess is often in reality as superior in knowledge, habits, and associations, to the family in which she resides, as the members of that family are to the servants who wait around their table; and yet we all agree, as if by universal consent, to consider it a degradation to go out.

Wherever an opinion prevails which is contrary to reason, a hope may be indulged, though but a faint one, of its being finally overthrown; and thus, though perfectly aware that it is more diffi-

cult to alter the current of popular feeling, than to remove mountains, I cannot altogether despair, when I think what the happy results would be, of such an alteration in public opinion, as would permit young women to be industrious rather than dependent, and to employ their time and their talents in providing for themselves without being degraded. There is no help for governesses until this happy change is effected; and it is to the mothers of England alone, that we can look for so desirable a revolution both in private and social feeling.

When we look around upon society, and see the hundreds of young women who have comparatively nothing to do, in families where their fathers and brothers are overworked; when we see how the natural love of occupation directs them to all manner of trifling, and often to expensive and useless pursuits; when we think how much happier they would be if profitably employed; and how much better it would be for their parents, and all with whom they are concerned, if they also were bringing in a little money to the general stock; it is truly astonishing that the prejudices of society should place a barrier betwixt them and those honest and praiseworthy efforts, by which their health, both of body and mind, might be radically

improved. I speak not of the aristocracy of our land, of those who are born to rank and affluence, but of the middle class of society—of those who are connected with trade, and dependent upon business for the comforts they enjoy; and I repeat, it is truly astonishing that such prejudices should exist amongst them, as to condemn the females of this class so often to suffering, helplessness, and dependence, and, in short, to moral degradation; for what can more effectually destroy all sense of moral dignity, than to be penniless, powerless, hopeless, and unoccupied?

I have already alluded to those frequent marriages of calculation and interest which are both looked out for, and entered into, under these circumstances; and were I to trust myself to draw a picture of the result of such marriages, as they operate upon different varieties of character, and upon society in general, I believe I could bring home conviction to the hearts of at least some of the mothers of England; but time and space, as well as the general nature of this work, forbid that such minute details of individual experience should be exhibited here. It would be more to my present purpose, if mothers could but be brought to believe, that with them rests the power of turning the current of popular opinion into a more whole-

some and beneficial channel—that with them rests the power of making their daughters at once more independent, more useful, and consequently happier than they are.

I allude to the preventive process, which is the only one capable of operating with any efficiency here; and I would ask in the first place, whether any possible reason can be given, why the daughters of a family, whose sole maintenance is an honest and respectable business, should hold themselves so immeasurably above all contact with it, even in its remotest branches? It cannot be from want of capacity, when they have had so much of the profits of that business spent upon the cultivation and improvement of their minds. It cannot be from want of health, or, if it be, this very occupation would be to them the best medicine. And if the business in which their fathers and brothers are engaged, is one in which women cannot with propriety take part, there is a wide field of occupation afforded by others, so that none need be at a loss, if only the degradation could be overcome—if only it could be rendered less agonizing to the nerves of a young lady to "*go out.*"

But one of the great advantages of this change of public opinion, and one which ought to come home to the feelings of every mother, would

accrue to that now unfortunate class of young women, who, from loss of parents, or change of circumstances, are compelled to go out, often having been brought up to expect nothing but indulgence and plenty; and, above all, after having been educated in the popular belief, that to provide for themselves, is at once a calamity and a degradation. The sufferings of young women thus circumstanced, what pen shall describe! To some of us, the breaking up of a once happy and honourable home would be sufficient, the uprooting of family interests, the severing of family ties, the actual loss to the heart and the affections; to say nothing of the over-esteemed indulgences of artificial life. But when we add to these, the frequently altered behaviour of friends and associates to the young woman who has to *seek a situation*, the loss of caste in society, the remarks which every one then feels at liberty to make upon the previous extravagance of her family, the cold reception of strangers, the doubtful position when placed in an unknown household, and the selfishness of those who, in purchasing industry and talent, expect to purchase kindness of feeling, and identity of interest, as well—when we think how little of either is often shown in return, how often the mother who has engaged a governess for her

children, expects that governess to listen with untiring interest to her long details of family matters, while she never makes it her business to ascertain whether the governess has or has not a father or a mother; and when in just glancing at this view of the picture, we know that it presents but the surface of the real situation of many a governess; and that deeper sufferings, and annoyances a hundredfold more trying, lie beneath; it becomes a question of Christian benevolence towards those young women who are under the necessity of going out, whether we ought not to do something to stem the tide of popular feeling on this particular point, so as to mitigate the hardships of their lot.

Mothers who have recourse to the assistance of governesses in their families, may certainly do much, by extending towards them something of that maternal care and sympathy which their own children enjoy; and that this is often done with true generosity of feeling, many of those young women who are deprived of the society of their natural protectors have thankfully to acknowledge. But it is not the mere fact of being kindly, or even respectfully treated, at the table of a stranger, which can remedy the evil. There must be a change in public feeling, and a removal of social and indi-

vidual prejudice on these subjects, before the situation of governesses in general can be rendered anything but miserable; and it is to mothers only that we can appeal on behalf of their own children, if such a lot should ever become their's—and on behalf of the children of other families broken up or dispersed—for commencing with the early training of their daughters, a totally different order of thought and feeling on these subjects; and by qualifying them for the efforts they may have to make, by the early cultivation of moral courage based on the strong foundation of religious principle.

The love of a mother is naturally, and, as it exists in the animal creation, a tender brooding love—a love that brings home, as it were, beneath the parent's wing, and which delights in nothing so much as feeling that the beloved ones are safe, and safe because they are near. But the Christian mother has to look beyond the limits of this narrow and exclusive love, and to throw precisely the same feelings into a far wider field of thought and calculation. She has, in short, to leave herself out of the question of her children's happiness, and to form their characters upon such a basis, as that they shall be as safe when her influence is withdrawn, as when they are immediately beneath her eye. She cannot expect to be always near her

daughters, and whether or not they have to share the lot above described, they will in all probability be established in homes, separate, if not distant, from hers, where they will have to act for, and by, themselves. To fit them for this, or for whatever may betide in the vicissitude of human affairs, is then her great object; and while she makes them generally useful, and thoroughly initiated in all the business of domestic life, she will see the advantage, too often lost sight of, of bringing them up with the thorough knowledge of some additional art or attainment, by which they may, if required, be able to maintain themselves; but at the same time she must instil into their minds an honourable conviction, that the practice of such an art is far more commendable, and far more conducive to happiness, than the helplessness of mere artificial refinements, or the meanness of voluntary dependence.

In this manner, the mother will provide more effectually for the welfare of her daughters, than the father who toils to obtain them a fortune; and when her tender and watchful eye is about to close upon them for ever, she will have the satisfaction of leaving them a support to their country, an honour to society, and a blessing to those with whom they may be most intimately associated.

CHAP. XII.

ON RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE.

On the subject of religious influence, I do not feel myself called upon to enter at length into a description of that change of heart, without which the mother can have little to hope for in the religious education of her children. Throughout the course of this work, it has appeared to me a duty to throw out occasional hints, in the hope that they may be found useful, even to religious parents, rather than to lay down any specific rule, by which the religious character may be formed. There are other writers to do this, of far higher qualifications than myself; while it is possible that many things connected with the morals of social life, which strike the eye of the more trifling observer, may entirely escape their notice.

I would not be supposed, however, to glance only with careless indifference at this most essen-

tial part of the qualifications of a mother; because no one can feel more fully persuaded than myself, that it is the only basis of all good morals, and of all good influence; nor have I even imagined what motives to propose, or what arguments to use, in addressing a mother unconvinced of this great fundamental truth—that without a religious foundation, there is no education worthy of the name. Thus, if I have not directly urged the importance of a change of heart on the part of the mother, it has been because I considered the subject too extensive in its relations, and too profound in its interests, to find an appropriate place in a work of this description—not because I believed it possible for a mother to train up her child in the way he should go, without being in her own character a consistent Christian.

It is, however, a lamentable fact, that the children of pious parents sometimes deviate widely from the path of wisdom and of peace; that while strictly guarded from the vices of the world, they sometimes give way to secretly cherished faults; and sometimes, under the influence of a sort of worldly-righteousness, wear an outward aspect of religion, without possessing its inward and spiritual life.

It becomes then an important question—whe-

ther there may not have been some defect on the part of the parents? It is possible they may have failed in faith, or they may have failed in prayer; but they may also have failed in the adaptation of means to the end proposed; they may have failed in knowledge, in consideration, or in common sense, and these are instances which come more immediately under our notice here.

They may have failed from ignorance of the world, and of human nature; for it is possible to be too guarded, too exclusive, and too strict in their requirements; because we never can do good by attempting to crush nature; and it should always be borne in mind, that the work of grace is to operate upon nature, not to extinguish it.

Some parents, again, are extremely solicitous to guard their children from all external harm—from all infection from without; but are forgetful of the diseases which lurk within the human heart, and which in such cases not unfrequently assume the character of hypocrisy or spiritual pride; for where a child is scrupulously kept from association with others, from reading their books, and sharing in their amusements, it is perfectly natural that, without great care, it should learn to consider itself too good to be their companion.

Where a child enjoys the privilege of seeing

constantly exemplified in its mother's character, the beauty of Christian meekness, it will be less likely to fall into this error; but where the mother is forward in her religious profession, loud in her condemnation of the world, and quick to judge and to condemn, there is little hope that the characters of her children will be adorned with that pearl beyond all price—a meek and quiet spirit.

There is something too much opposed to meekness in the spirit of the times in which we live; and it is the duty of the mother, amongst her other calculations, to take into account the peculiar tone of popular feeling, and the tendency of social habits and modes of thinking which prevail throughout the circle in which she moves, in order that her children may be fitted for situations of usefulness in this world, as well as for enjoying the reward of the righteous in the world to come.

I have often had occasion to observe, that the tendency of the present times is to look to obvious display, and immediate results, in everything we undertake; and in nothing is this more striking, than in our religious duties. There is a great deal of profession; a great deal of going to church and chapel; a great deal of flocking to hear popu-

lar preachers; a great deal of dependence upon outward means; a great deal of the hurry and the business of religion, with but little time for the secret examination of the heart; and hence there follows a danger of our coming to consider religion, rather as something performed, than as something experienced; hence also, there follows a degree of indifference with regard to those minor points of domestic morals, which tell for nothing before the world, but which are, in their strictness and conformity to the Divine law, as much the fruits of the Spirit, as the zeal of the missionary, or the public labours of the philanthropist.

It can scarcely be expected of men, that they should pause from those public avocations which so much occupy all classes of society in the present day, to regard these apparently trifling matters; nor indeed have they the peculiar talent, or character of mind, which would qualify them for minute observation in this sphere of duty; but we do look to women, and to mothers especially, to see that religion is not *performed* in the sanctuary, and praised on the platform, while the world is in reality the household god which presides over the domestic hearth—the world in its fair, and plausible, and reputable character—that world which has kindly come forward and taken religion by

the hand, and prophesied smooth things, and said, let us walk to the house of God in company, and take sweet counsel together—that world which, with all its specious promises, its patronage, its fellowship, and its support, is still but the world, and never can be made a substitute for the humbling heart-searching influence of true and spiritual religion.

Especially the mother must be watchful of her own life and conduct, in this respect. It is not merely by talking exclusively about sermons, ministers, or Sunday-schools, that a stand can be made against the encroachments of the world, to which I allude. Since religious persecution of an open character has been discountenanced by the laws of our land, since it has become respectable—nay, genteel—to be religious, there has existed a very natural tendency to indulge in a kind of religious gossip, essentially worldly in its spirit and character, which with many persons is made to fill up the spare moments of the sabbath, and is mistaken for suitable and even edifying conversation. I do not say that the subjects alluded to should be excluded from social intercourse. Far from it; for they are subjects which very properly lie near to the heart devoted to the service of its heavenly Master; but there is a worldly manner in which such subjects

are sometimes entered into, which dwells only upon the outward and material aspect of religious life, and which has as little relation to the work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating the heart, as if the actual dress and manners of a congregation, met for purposes of worship, were made the theme of a sabbath-day's discourse.

It is for the mother to exemplify by her whole life, that she drinks at a well of deeper interest, in her religious experience—from fountains hewn out of the living rock; and therefore when she converses upon the common and familiar topics of the day, it will be with a moral in the general tone and spirit of what she says, which can only be derived from her own habitual communion of soul with the Father of spirits. It is for the mother to mix with her family in all social and domestic avocations, not with a strict and exclusive air of superiority, as if holier than the rest, but as one whose presence is more felt than seen, diffusing an influence of meekness, charity, and peace; while it imparts to everything that is said and done, a tendency to unite, combine, and operate so as to promote the glory of Him, on whose blessing, alone, she depends for the safety of her children.

It is often the duty of a mother, and one which ought never to be neglected, to give her time

and attention to the mere trifles of the moment. Indeed, so pressing are these claims occasionally found, that some well-meaning mothers find no time to go beyond them. There is, however, a scale to be observed in the importance we attach to each department of duty, and on the right adjustment of this scale, depends the good influence of a parent. If, for instance, the mother can find time to attend to the fitting and forming of a carpet, and none to listen when a child is anxious to hear about the things of eternity; or if she is interested and indignant about the accidental spoiling of a dress, and evinces but little feeling when a child has resisted any strong temptation; it is evident that in her hands, the moral scale must be very differently adjusted, before she can expect her religious influence to be of much benefit to her children.

There is also a grudging and reluctant manner of giving to the duties of religion their due share of regard, which has a very injurious effect upon the minds of children, for they are quick to observe, not only what is done, but in what spirit we act; and the peevishness, and flurry of temper, consequent upon a late breakfast on the morning of the sabbath, with the tumultuous preparation of a family for their usual well-dressed appearance at

a place of worship, is scarcely to be preferred to the indifference which would allow them all to remain at home. For harsh words are apt to be spoken at such times, and mutual reproaches thrown out amongst the parties most to blame; while, as a natural consequence, all things go wrong, because there has been no time for preparing them to go right. Perhaps in the midst of all this, a mockery of family worship is performed, and the child who has just heard its father speak in tones of anger and reproach, has to kneel down and join with him in prayer.

With the mother, then, rests the practical duty of exhibiting by her own self-denying conduct, her supreme regard for religion, both in her heart, and her household. Whoever chooses to be idle or negligent, she must be early prepared; and as it is much easier to go to church, than to give up a selfish inclination, she must convince her children, that this sacrifice is not too much for her to make. There may be many motives, not altogether pure in themselves, to induce, in the present day, an outward observance of religious duties; but when the mother of a family, whose whole life is consistent with her Christian profession, rises the earliest in the household, though perhaps in her own frame the weakest; when she is always pre-

pared in a cheerful and quiet spirit to meet the requirements of the day and hour, though perhaps having more to think of and arrange than any other member of the family; when she, in her own person, has done her part to remove obstacles, and smooth the way, that others may tread more softly on the path of duty; when she has put away every selfish feeling, and done all this for months and years, in the true spirit of Christian and maternal love, I believe it will not be found in the hearts of her children, to resist the silent working of so holy and so powerful an influence.

I have said that the eye of childhood is quick to observe the spirit of what we do, as well as the acts we perform; and in nothing is this more evident than in the general service which the Christian is called upon to render to the cause of the Redeemer on earth. That God is love, is at once the most sublime, and the most important truth which can be impressed upon the mind of youth. We all know that this truth is often told; but how is it exemplified to the credulous and inexperienced? Alas! what an amount of dolorous lamentations over sin and sorrow, compared with the real rejoicings which we hear in the mercy and goodness of God, and especially in the

means of salvation so freely offered to the sinner! What threatenings of Divine wrath against the guilty; what talk about religion, in seasons of distress; what pointing to that consolation, in the absence of all other; but what neglect of the same means for sanctifying our enjoyments, by referring them to the great Source of all human happiness!

Sorrow and sin are made powerful instruments in enforcing convictions of religious truth; but ought not joy to have its share, more especially as vice lays hold of joy as its instrument on every hand? for how can we expect that the young should be attracted by that which is always associated with gloom, when they see, on the other hand, that its opposite is associated with cheerfulness and mirth? It is in after life, when we seek a refuge for our grief, when we ask a shelter for our chagrin, and a hiding-place for our tears, that nothing seems so welcome to us as *the shadow of a mighty rock in a weary land.* Youth knows none of these sad yearnings of the heart. The future is bright, and the present full of joy, to those who are just setting out upon the journey of life; and therefore that which offers them the happiness of a world to come, only as a substitute for the enjoyments of this, cannot be expected to recommend itself to their natural affections.

But what is the joy of a child? Is it not a beautiful and a holy thing? and why should it then be associated only with toys and laughter? The joy of a child is that which the world is too poor to restore, when once it has been extinguished. It comes directly from the hand of God, so lovely and so pure, that for the brief space of its enjoyment upon earth, it does good to the heart of the weary, and revives the hope of the fainting, by reflecting a light which they know *must* be from heaven, and which they believe to be still shining on, in more perfect refulgence there. The joy of a child is so ecstatic, so self-existent, and so unbounded, that it seems to belong simply to the young fresh life with which its existence commences, and requires little beyond that existence to render it complete. Thus it is perfectly true, that even when deprived of the love and the care of its mother, the child will at times be happy still. It may even laugh, and make merry, in the chamber of sickness where her life is ebbing away—nay, it will sometimes play in the churchyard before the grass has grown upon her grave. But though the mother cannot always create the joy of her child, she may influence and direct it; and though it will at times be happy, whether she makes it so or not, she may use this strong impulse of its

nature, so as to lead it to rejoice in what is lovely, good, and kind; and, as it advances in knowledge and experience, in that which may be associated either immediately or remotely with the Divine nature and attributes.

There is a great difference betwixt rejoicing because of receiving a new toy; and because of having spent, for the first time, a whole day without being out of temper. There is a great difference betwixt rejoicing because of a holiday; and because a poor family have been supplied with the comfort of a winter's fire. There is a great difference betwixt rejoicing because invited to a party; and because permitted to attend in the chamber of a sick relative or friend. The sensations of joy may be equal in all these occasions, but the exciting causes are so different in their nature, as to produce a widely different effect upon the moral feelings. It is thus throughout the whole of human experience. The natural impulse of early youth is to be happy; but without proper direction, this impulse may be entirely trifled away, or it may even be expended upon objects which ought never to awaken gladness in the human breast.

From the quick susceptibilities of women and children, and the strong sympathies which exist between a mother and a child, it is not difficult

for her to give a powerful and lasting bias to the young minds committed to her care, so as permanently to fix their ideas of attractiveness or repulsion, of beauty or deformity, of happiness or misery, of good or evil; and upon this foundation rests the whole character; for what we admire we naturally aim at, what we love we naturally seek, and what we have learned to regard as essential to our enjoyment, we naturally desire to possess.

Were it possible for any human heart to be so far laid open as to reveal its earliest impressions of that first bias, which its simple likings and dislikings received from a mother, what a page would be unfolded for the instruction and benefit of parents. Perhaps, for instance, it might be a feeling of disgust and indignation exhibited against some poor insect, with a triumphing and delight in the power of being able to destroy it; and the same mother might wonder as her children grew up, that they should be fond of killing animals, she might reason with them, plead with them, and all to no purpose; for the strong impression would have been made by her own countenance and expressions, and though her after reasoning might convince, that impression would remain as vivid as ever.

I have selected this instance, because it was the

first which presented itself; but it is only one amongst thousands of a similar nature, which are daily occurring. I do not say that animals should not be killed, or that children should be taught to shrink with a morbid sensibility from the necessity of destroying them. It is the manner in which such things are done, which conveys the moral to the mind of a child; and wherever there is evidently a feeling of victory, triumph, and joy associated with the act of killing, on the part of a mother, her children will be in danger of growing up cruel in their sports, if not pitiless to suffering in general.

Again, we make a serious mistake, when we trust to argument and conviction for effacing impressions which have been made in what, to children, is a much more forcible manner. A child learns to feel, long before it learns to reason. There are innumerable chords of feeling with which its young life is interwoven, which cannot be touched without producing a corresponding impression upon its mind; and thus, wherever a strong bias has been received, it can only be counteracted by a stronger, made through the same medium of sympathies, and their consequent impressions.

To continue the illustration already given,

I repeat, that neither argument nor entreaty would have the desired effect, because they would not reach the feelings through the same medium; but an ingenious mother, who had the power of ascertaining from what circumstances in relation to her own conduct the impression had been made, would see that the task was not hopeless, so long as she was able to carry the sympathies of her children along with her. She would, therefore, begin, without any direct reference to the question of cruelty, to interest her children in the habits and characters of animals in general, and when a suitable occasion should offer, she would endeavour to render especially interesting, those of the particular class against which she had exercised a spirit of cruelty. If a woman of philosophic mind, she would probably enlarge upon its natural history, the curious construction of its frame, and its beautiful adaptation to circumstances of climate and food; or if a woman of playful fancy, she would probably rivet the attention, and work upon the feelings of her children, by giving them a little history of its social habits, its enjoyment of home and family, its protection of its young, and the suffering and distress which would ensue from its untimely death; and, in all probability,

this method of producing an impression would be found the best.

But we must recur again to the same difficulty; because we do not and cannot know, exactly, how all the impressions upon the mind of a child are made; and therefore it is the more important that the mother should be watchful in the extreme, of her own conduct.

Let us take another illustration of the same subject, and suppose that a mother has been most careful in her religious instruction, and even exemplary in her own general habits; but that there happens with her, as with many, to be one prevailing weakness, which she makes no effort to overcome—it consists in too high an estimate of the wealthy and the great, simply because they are such. Her child who has not learned this lesson of worldly wisdom, is interested in behalf of a poor man, whose conduct has not been altogether correct; but the mother expresses a degree of righteous indignation against him, which the child is without difficulty made to understand and sympathize in. In the midst of this discussion, a carriage adorned with a coronet stops at the door. A wealthy and titled lady is ushered into the apartment, and received by the mother with every

demonstration of admiration and esteem. The usual civilities take place; and the mother, even after her guest has departed, expatiates with enthusiastic delight upon the graciousness of the interview, and her hope of its being renewed. This titled lady, however, is not more exemplary than the poor man. The child knows it, for her conversation has sufficiently betrayed a worldly or a selfish character; and the child learns from this lesson, that religion requires a stricter code of morals in the poor, than the rich; and that a certain degree of laxity of sentiment may pass unquestioned through the world, because it travels with a coach-and-four.

It is possible I may have described rather an extreme case, yet I feel not the less confident, that circumstances of a similar nature are transpiring every day, from which children, and young people generally, imbibe notions, and receive impressions, from our conduct, wholly at variance with the principles we are endeavouring to lay down for their's; and that it is only by looking narrowly, and with searching eye, into the character of our whole lives—taking the Bible, and not the opinion of the world, not even that of the religious world, for our guide—that we can maintain that high

standard of Christian morals, without which religion must ever be an empty name.

And here I must observe, as we all do at different times, and often with humiliation and pain, that there are certain sins, or rather certain faults, which mankind appear to have agreed together to indulge. Selfishness may fairly be classed amongst these. We hear many sins denounced as heinous, but we seldom hear of a man's Christianity being called in question because he is selfish. The cause is evident. We are all selfish, more or less. We choose to be so, and therefore it is greatly for our interest that this particular sin should be thought little of.

But the Christian mother knows that although the religion of the world may take little cognizance of this fault, or of many others of the same description, the religion of Jesus is as much opposed to what is evil in one form, as in another; and that it was especially the business of the Saviour while on earth, to denounce those abuses which had crept into society under the sanction of a pretended zeal for the true religion. The Christian mother knows that it is not for man, or woman either, to measure and compute the degrees of evil, so as to calculate what sin may be indulged with the least offence. The righteous law of God admits

of no such comparison. Sin is sin wherever it exists; and we have as much need to pray to be cleansed from secret faults, as from those transgressions which stamp with disgrace our character and name.

Finally, it is good for all who have children committed to their care, to dwell often in their secret thoughts upon the name of mother—upon what it means, upon what it comprehends, and upon the deep feelings with which it is associated. "Take me back to my mother," is the prayer of the lost child; and there is an echo to this prayer in the bosom of every wanderer from the ways of virtue, whose mother has been his early guide along the path of righteousness and peace. "I will go, and make confession to my mother," is the impulse of the child who has done wrong; and that impulse remains the same in after life, when conviction comes home to the alienated heart, and memory brings again the scenes of cherished infancy, with all the tender solicitude, and all the anxious warnings, of an affectionate mother. "My mother would have pitied—my mother would have loved me," is the thought of the orphan sufferer, when the treatment of strangers is repulsive or unkind; and who shall set limits to this natural yearning of the heart, or say at what stage of

experience it will cease to exist? But again, "My mother will help me," is the exulting exclamation when assailed by the first difficulties of life; and happy are they, whether children, or more advanced in years, who can fly back to a sheltered home, and claim the assistance of a mother!

But it would be impossible to trace out one by one the various modes, all tender, all endearing, and all calculated to supply the wants of nature, in which the name of mother operates upon the human heart; and perhaps we understand this best, when we regard her character as a whole—a beautiful and perfect whole; for I believe it is chiefly in this manner that mankind have been led into the worship of her, who knew not, and assumed not, more than the common nature of a woman. They have been led to seek for something beyond themselves, to which they could appeal—something as human, but far more perfect, and more holy — some being whose eye would look kindly, and whose soul would pity, even when utterly degraded; who would speak the language of forgiveness, without reproach in its tone; who would stand between the sinner and his offended God, and plead for him, because of his weakness; who would not turn away from him on the ground of his many and repeated transgressions; but

would bear with him because he was human, and beset with temptations—and therefore I repeat, that being directed by nature to look for all this in the character of a mother, the revelation which came to exhibit that which nature demanded, in the person of a Saviour—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who became in all respects like one of us—was rejected as insufficient for the wants of humanity; and the natural heart went yearning back to deify the humble Mary, simply because she was a woman, and a *mother*.

Let those who mock at this worship think of its deep moral. We learn from the poor heathen, when he bows down to his senseless idol, when he makes confession before it, and atonement to appease its offended majesty, that there is a principle implanted in his nature, which leads him to look beyond himself, and beyond the range of common sympathy, for something by which what is wrong will be condemned, and what is right approved; but, above all, guilty and ignorant, and debased as he is, he looks for some power or principle from whence a sense of safety, and even of forgiveness, may be derived; and we read in all this, the natural and often polluted worship of the heart, an imperfect shadowing forth of what human nature in its weakness and its

urgent necessity requires. And shall we be less quick to read in the mistaken worship just alluded to, that the name of mother, with all its tender and all its beautiful associations, conveys to the human heart the most perfect realization it is possible to conceive, of all it needs to supply its simply human necessities?

I have said that the high ideas we attach to the name of mother, depend upon the perfection of her character as a whole; but by this I do not mean that the mother should be faultless; because such an assertion would at once defeat the object for which I write. In the religious instruction of her children, the mother will have found it necessary to prepare them, not to look for perfection in any human form; but rather to expect that amongst the best of human beings there will be faults, while amongst the worst there will occasionally be something to commend. She will have taught them, that it is the state of the heart before God, upon which their eternal safety depends; and as an illustration of this, she will doubtless have directed their attention to the character of David, in whose history is beautifully exemplified the weakness of human nature, with that sincerity of repentance, and that entire reliance upon Divine instruction and support, by which alone

the path of safety can be regained after it has once been forsaken.

I have already said that what is done by a mother is of infinite importance to her children, because a single fault indulged on her part, may impart its character to their whole lives, and spread through circle after circle of influence, widening on, and still extending, long after she herself has been gathered to her last earthly home. But since we are all human, and since the brightest examples of earthly excellence are shadowed by some cloud, and obscured by some defect, the mother has no need to be discouraged as regards her religious influence, so long as her heart is right with God; because there will be a spirit pervading her whole life, to which her children will not be insensible; and even her very struggles against what is wrong, and her sincere repentance, may be more effectual in their influence upon her children, than if they beheld her in all things perfect; because they would then have doubts whether she could feel for their trials, and sympathize in their temptations.

Indeed I have often thought, that if religious people in general were more willing than they are to confess, in the true spirit of Christian meekness, wherein they have done wrong, it would be better both for themselves and for those around them.

A general, and I believe a very sincere lamentation over their errors and short-comings, we frequently hear; but it is to be feared that a natural desire to maintain a certain kind of dignity before the world, a dread of their character being sullied by the slightest stain, and the exemption usually conceded to them, from all minute inspection of their habitual conduct, beyond a certain boundary-line of consistency, all tend to operate against those free and humble acknowledgments of individual and particular error, which do good in a twofold manner—first, by placing us in the position of being pledged to amend the fault we have confessed; and secondly, by convincing others that we do not believe ourselves more perfect than we are; and that, consequently, when we labour with them for their own improvement, it is with no spirit of dictation, as if holier than they.

A character, shrouded from inspection, whose faults are neither confessed by their possessor, nor hinted at by others, is in imminent danger of learning to consider them as no faults at all; or of continuing to indulge in them, from a belief that they are not obvious to others; while with regard to the faults which have been confessed, the sincere Christian retains no plea for their continuance—they must be given up, or the sincerity of his

desire after a holier life naturally falls under suspicion. It is good, then, even for the deeply experienced Christian, to endeavour to set this hedge about his path; and it is especially good for the mother of a family, to prove to her children that she is not blind to the defects of her own character, and to convince them of the sincerity of her repentance when she has done wrong, by her faithful and persevering efforts to do better for the future.

By this mode of conduct, I believe that a more intimate union of feeling, and especially of religious feeling, might be established between the mother and her children, than ever can be attained where there is an attempt to appear infallible before the searching eye of youth; and while the mother exhibits in her own character this strong evidence of Christian meekness, she will draw within the circle of her influence all those relative associations which belong to the real state of human beings upon earth—to the weakness of man, and the forgiveness of God—to the repentance of the sinner, and the mercy on which alone he depends—to the refuge of prayer, and the promises of the Gospel.

The mother would, by this means, more effectually encourage her children in believing that

though we have sinned, and come short of the requirements of a just and righteous law, there is a pardon, full and free, offered for the acceptance of all; and that it is not by justifying ourselves in the sight either of man or God, that we can escape condemnation; but by coming, again and again, and not the less because we have erred and strayed from the right way, to weep at the feet of the Saviour, to renew our resolutions at the footstool of mercy, and to ask if there is not yet a blessing left for the suppliant, who knows not where else to implore it.

It is scarcely possible to conclude a chapter on a subject of such importance as that of religious influence, without one word addressed to those mothers who have never regarded it as a question of vital moment, whether they had any religious influence or not; but as it may chance that some eye will glance over these pages, which has never learned to look beyond the interests of the present life, I would ask, seriously and affectionately, What is that future for which we are all preparing? Is it the meridian of life? No; that can scarcely be, for hope in the noontime of existence is as busy with the human heart as at its early dawn; and the future, still the future, is the promised reward of every undertaking—the echo of every

aspiration of the soul. Is it then for grey hairs, and old age? No; that is still less probable, for half the occupations in which mankind engage, would be useless, if that were the only end at which we aimed. But is it for death, and the grave? "Ah! no," you answer with a shudder, "we know that death must come, but we banish it from our thoughts, because we cannot bear to look upon it as the consummation of all we wish, and strive to attain."

Alas! what a melancholy fate is their's, who live only to sail down the stream of pleasure, towards a point of destiny, for which they make it no part of their duty to prepare! But what shall we say when the mother not only hurries along this course herself, but takes along with her the choicest treasures committed to her trust, for whose temporary safety she would almost sacrifice her life?

We can only say, that if all other beings had been reckless of future destiny, we should have looked to the mother, with her natural yearning for the welfare of her child, to have eagerly appropriated those promises of eternal happiness which are set forth in the Gospel, as necessary for her peace of mind in relation to her child, if not to herself; and as the last of many earnest and affectionate appeals, I would urge her once again

to implore the protection of Him who alone can effectually shield from danger the motherless and the orphan, and who, when she no longer fills the place of a parent upon earth, can receive her beloved ones into the bosom of eternal rest.

It is for the mother to ponder these things well, and to ask of her own heart, whether the conditional offers of everlasting safety which the Gospel holds out, though encouraging, important, and necessary for herself, are not a hundred-fold more valuable, when they bring with them, what her tenderest solicitude could never have procured—a well-grounded confidence in the salvation of her child, and in her indissoluble union through all eternity, with those whose affection constituted her happiness on earth?

THE END.

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